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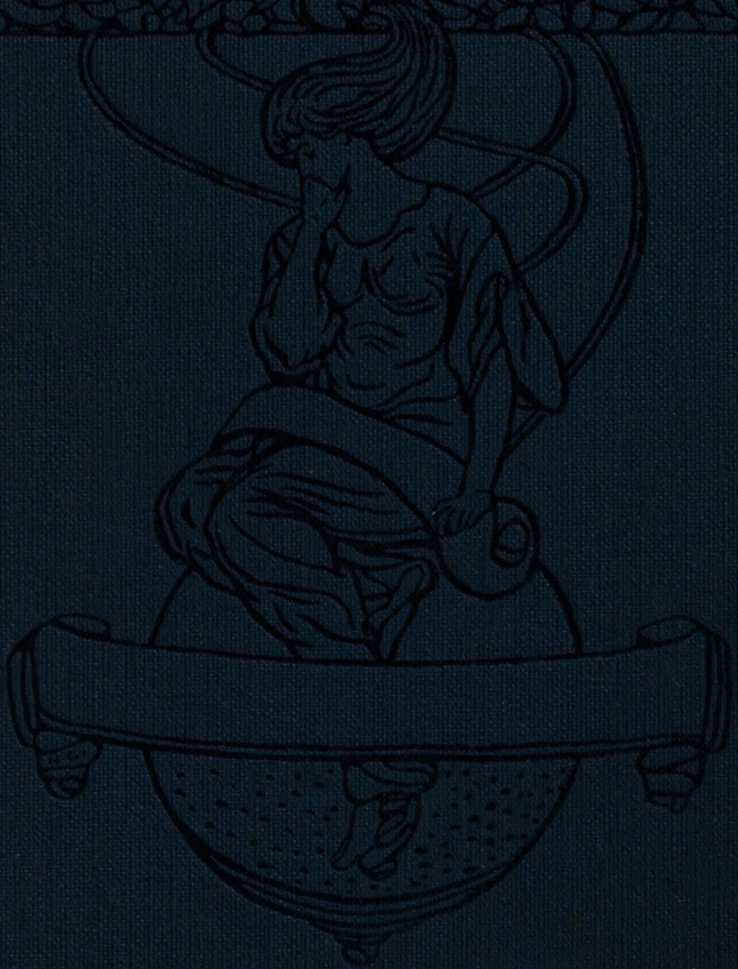
THE MONK OF EVESHAM



FROM THE LIBRARY

OF

HELEN C. WHITE

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THE REVELATION
TO
THE MONK OF EVESHAM.

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UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME.

MORE'S MILLENNIUM.

BRADFORD'S HISTORY OF THE PLYMOUTH SETTLEMENT.

An admirable series in which the modern reader may study the ancient masterpieces without the impediment of obscure or obsolete turns of phrase necessitating frequent reference to notes and glossary. The matter and spirit of the originals are preserved, the form is changed where necessary into clear and dignified modern English. The first three volumes form an interesting and varied group. "More's Millennium" is of course the Utopia of Sir Thomas More. "The Revelation to the Monk of Evesham" is a 12th century vision of the souls of the dead in Purgatory and Paradise. "The History of the Plymouth Settlement" is the narrative of the famous voyage of the Pilgrim Fathers in "The Mayflower."

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THE REVELATION TO THE MONK OF EVESHAM ABBEY

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ELEVEN HUNDRED AND NINETY SIX, CONCERNING THE PLACES OF PURGATORY AND PARADISE.

RENDERED INTO MODERN ENGLISH BY

VALERIAN PAGET.

LONDON: ALSTON RIVERS, LTD.
BROOKE STREET, HOLBORN BARS, E.C.
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God Is Love

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Introduction

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It seems strange that a classic of such importance as "The Revelation to the Monk of Evesham Abbey," whether considered from its historical, religious, or literary aspect, should not have been rendered into modern English, that he who runs may read. As far as I am aware, Professor Arber's edition of the work, which is an exact reprint of the unique original impression in the British Museum, is the only form in which it is available. That the large majority of readers should be thus debarred from enjoying one of the most valuable and remarkable heirlooms of English literature, seems an inexplicable oversight. Hence the present issue, which endeavours to represent the vision of the mystic by free translation into current language and paraphrase of the early English of the original, while preserving as far as

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possible its exact meaning, and even its mediæval atmosphere.

It is not to be supposed that such a rendering shall be a satisfactory substitute of the original for the philologist or the student of literature; though it is hoped that it may be of service even to some such litterateurs by introducing them to a work with which they have been hitherto unacquainted. It is published, of course, first and foremost in the interests of the general reader.

The historical importance of the "Revelation" lies in the light it throws upon the religious life and problems of the twelfth century, when politics almost solely consisted of the eternal secular conflicts between the powers spiritual and the powers temporal. In his scathing denunciation of the corruption of the religious community, in his picture of the depravity with-

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in the Church and its demoralizing effect upon the lay community, the Monk forestalls the judgment passed upon the episcopate and the ecclesiastical dignitaries by Milton in his "Lycidas."

Here are the words the Monk puts into the mouth of his guide, St. Nicholas:

"The present depravity of religious life, which before, in the time of the Fathers, shone and flowered nobly, though the prelates of these days are aware of it, is so despised and ignored by them that they do not heed its significance. But they give themselves to the lusts and pleasures of the world, instead of following Christ's poverty, and diligently minding their duty and caring for the people of God committed to them. They do not feed but destroy the people of God, and when the laity have turned them from righteousness, the priests flee from them,

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not showing themselves fathers and pastors, but wolves and thieves. The promotion of such persons by the king or bishops and other great men, is an evil to the people; for they are not rectors and fathers, but perverters and destroyers of souls, who think that whatever they do is lawful."

Here are the words of Milton:

"*Of other care they little reckoning make,*
Than how to scramble at the shearer's feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest:
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learn'd aught else the least
That to the faithful herdsman's art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;

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And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread."

Three hundred years after the cry of this Monk went up from his cell in the Abbey of Evesham, in Worcestershire, came the convulsion and labour of the Church which created a Luther and culminated in the Reformation. With such a contemporary document before us, it seems impossible to accept the assertion of a set of Anglican religionists that the severance of the English from the Roman Church is to be ascribed to the adultery and arrogance of Henry VIII, in conflict with Papal principles.

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That incident fanned into flame the embers of revolt already glowing against ecclesiastical corruption which had been smouldering for centuries: it was not the first cause of the secession, as all open minded Catholics will be willing to recognize.

The present century is witnessing such another travail, of the same religious body in France. The Monk, had he lived to-day, would have ranked with the modernists, whose aims are the cleansing and reformation of the Church by consent from within rather than by compulsion from without, and the restoration and preservation of the most magnificent system of religious organization in the world.

Bunyan's splendid hymn of courage and patience comes to the strengthening and comfort of those who, with the natural weakness of human anxiety, would see the heavens open

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with a miracle for the healing of their beloved Church, and for the empowering of those into whose hands is committed her worldly guidance:

"*The trials, that those men do meet withal*
That are obedient to the heavenly call,
Are manifold, and suited to the flesh;
And come, and come, and come again afresh,
Be taken, overcome and cast away.
O, let the Pilgrims, let the Pilgrims then
Be vigilant; and quit themselves like men!"

"The mills of the gods grind slowly"—and the tale is not yet told. Seven hundred years in the working out of Christ's creed is but as a watch in the night.

So much for the main historical aspect of the work. When we turn to its more purely doctrinal and religious contents, we should recall, for the sake of its setting and background, that

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it was the period of the Morality Play, such as "Everyman," and its dramatic performance for the edification of the laity, presented in the churches at the festal seasons; and, again, of the frescoed "Doom," which, adorning the wall-surface above the chancel arch, revealed to the raised eyes of pious worshippers, on the one hand a scene of the ineffable bliss of spirits in paradise, on the other of the gruesome tortures by horned demons of souls in hell. The physical form of the punishments, designed to fit their respective sins, with ghastly tortures and ingenious torments, was proper to the age. Translated into forms of mental remorse—no such hard transition as it appears at first thought—the Monk's purgatory is not so far removed from our own conceptions of future retribution.

It is interesting to note, however, that, while

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inculcating the doctrine of purgatory in the after-life, the Monk allowed himself to speculate in advance of his day: it was not until 1438, at the Council of Florence, that it was approved and incorporated in the Roman Catholic faith. The doctrine of vicarious redemption, and the remission of punishment to souls in purgatory, by means of the gifts, alms, masses, and intercessions of those on earth, seems as illogical to the modern mind, with its strong bias to the irrevocability of the law of cause and effect, as the system of punishment for the transmitted evil of bad examples is striking and salutary in these days of uncompromising individualism. Leaving aside the more contentious doctrinal points in the religious features of the "Revelation," utterly charming in its piety and simple reality is the picture of the writer's personal spiritual intimacy with the

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saints, and his vivid examples of their practical help and active intervention—almost as in a sublimated Greek mythology appears the busy intercourse of gods with men.

For combined grandeur and sweetness of spiritual conception it is hard to find anywhere an equal to the concluding pages of the "Revelation," devoted to the description of paradise. Dante himself is not so direct or vivid. A modern work of great beauty, "A Little Pilgrim in the Unseen," touches a note almost the equal in sweetness, if not as effective in "vraisemblance" as our "Revelation."

The following is a glimpse into the Monk's elysium:

"Now when we had passed all these places and sights, and had journeyed still further inward, more and more joy and fairness greeted us on every side. At last we saw afar a glorious

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wall of crystal, whose height no one could tell, and the length none could measure. When we came near to it I saw a bright shining gate. Thither came flocking from all sides the multitude of those blessed souls that were near and wanted to enter in at that fair gate. The cross was set in the centre of the gateway; now it was lifted up on high and gave to those that came a wide and free entrance; afterwards it was let down again and shut out others who were waiting to come in. How joyful those that entered were, and how reverently those tarried that awaited the raising of the cross again, I cannot express in words! * * * What brightness and clearness of light was shining within, no one must ask or seek to know from me, for I cannot describe it by word, or remember it in thought! That glorious shining light was so bright and smooth and so ravished any

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that beheld it, that it lifted them above themselves, and what I had seen before seemed as nothing in comparison with this! * * * From the ground up to the top of the wall were steps beautifully and marvellously arranged, by which the joyful company that came in at the gate gladly ascended. There was no labour, no difficulty, no lingering in their ascent; the higher they went, the happier they were. I stood beneath upon the ground and watched for some time how they came in at the gate and ascended the steps. * * * I heard a marvellous peal of bells, ringing with solemn sweetness, as though all the bells in the world, or whatever has sound, had been rung together at one time. In this peal and ringing broke out a marvellous sweetness, and a various mingling of melody. I do not know whether the beauty of the melody or the sweetness of the sound was more wonderful."

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There now remains the consideration of the "Revelation" as a piece of literature. The original mss., no longer extant, was written in 1196, in the reign of Richard Cœur de Lion, its first printing being in the press of William de Machlinia on the Continent, about the year 1482; and it is the presumably unique copy of that impression that found its way from the library of King Henry VII to the British Museum. The English King, mentioned as in awful torment, may be identified as Henry II. The narrative itself is probably in part a true account of the visionary experiences of the mystic author, mingled with not a little purely imaginative embellishment. In fact, as Professor Arber says, it is in reality "a Middle Age work of Religious Fiction." He continues: "The Author was probably an Englishman, and wrote 'in thys gronde of in-

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glonde,' using the English of his time. The orthography and punctuation may have somewhat suffered at the hands of subsequent scribes or the foreign printer, until they certainly now form a villainous text: but the inditement is worthy of even so great a subject. It is rapid, clear, unhesitating, unhalting: except where all expression fails, when stretched out towards the expression of the immeasurable. Yet even then, immensity, whether of space or number, of woe or happiness, is not inadequately foreshadowed. There is great craft and subtlety in producing vraisemblance—despite inconsistent narration—by innumerable graphic touches, circumstantial details, and natural dialogues: all tending to give a sense of strong reality to things to us impalpable and invisible. In this clear conception helping a direct and apt expression we trace one part of the Author's mental power.

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"Beneath an uncouth text there is a direct diction and power, both of mind and soul; there is much that is true but simply distorted; with much that is ludicrous and purely false; and in all, undeniaby the best of motives and aspirations. With the infinitely greater advantages of the present day, how many of us would be inferior, man for man, to that unknown Monk, who, seven centuries ago, dreamt, or imagined that he saw 'a marvellous Revelation showed by Almighty God,' and wrote it down for the instruction, warning, and comfort of his fellow-Englishmen."

The work divides itself into two main parts. In the first is described the illness and trance of the Monk, with much circumstantial detail concerning the life within the monastery—probably with a view to impressing the reader with the reality of the vision and the accuracy of its

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record. In the second, and main portion, is the Monk's own narrative of his pilgrimage through Purgatory and Paradise, to the gates of Heaven itself, and his return to this life with complete recovery from his sickness.

Like Dante in his "Divina Comedia," written over a century later, where Virgil, as the poet's guide, takes the place of St. Nicholas in the "Revelation," the author sketches out the topography or map of the other world. To quote Professor Arber: "What then is the plan of this minor English Dante? The construction of his Purgatory is circular and on a plain. Heaven is conceived as the Centre, surrounded like rings, by 'fields' of pleasure or pain. The vast Circumference is the Death-point in Human Life. So the Soul is represented as going inward and yet more inward, as it were along a radius,—across the three 'fields' of

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Pains, then the 'field' of Paradise to the gate of Heaven. * * * From the Darkness, the Horror, and the Agony (of his Purgatory) we gladly turn towards Paradise. It is our author's counterpart to Bunyan's 'Land of Beulah.' In his rapturous welcome of it, no less than the absence of any sympathy on his part with the Suffering he had witnessed, we trace the true piety of the Author."

As the companions in this pilgrimage proceed further and further towards the central light, comes the author's wonderful account of the vision they behold of Our Lord's Passion—until at last they come to the gate of Heaven. His guide, St. Nicholas, tells the Monk that he has now seen all that may be shown to him: "And now thou must return to thyself and to thine and to the world's fighting." For sheer power of literary artistry surely nothing has ever

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surpassed the sublime passage that follows, which we have already quoted—the description of the peal of bells—"a touch," says Professor Arber, "which rivals even Bunyan's famous look through the gates of the Celestial City. That solemn peal and marvellously sweet ringing of the bells in the Easter morn of Heaven, so graphically described that we seem to hear them, is a crowning invention in the Vision."

Duffield, 1909. V. P.

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The Prologue of this Revelation

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The revelation that follows in this book relates how a certain devout man, who was a monk in the Abbey of Evesham, lay in a trance by the will of God for two days and two nights, and was led by the hand of St. Nicholas, to see and know the pains of purgatory and the joys of paradise, and to realise in what state souls exist there.

In both places he saw and knew many persons, both men and women, whom he had known well before, when they lived in this world. In both places in which he found them, he spoke to them face to face, as will be related.

This revelation was granted not only for his own good, but also for the comfort and benefit of all Christian people, in order that none might doubt of or disbelieve in another life and world, to which every man and woman must go at last;

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and, as they have deserved here in this world, when living, there to be rewarded.

As for the truth of this revelation, no man or woman ought to doubt it. If it is read and understood, from the beginning to the end, it will be seen to be proved, by the great miracles shown by Almighty God to the monk. All ideas of infidelity, which arise so often through human infirmity, will be utterly excluded and quenched by it, and it will cause all Christian people that hear it to dread God and love Him, and also to praise Him in His works. I believe that such another revelation, and one so open, was never shown in this land, nor in any other that we read of.

Here ends this Prologue

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Here begins the marvellous Revelation that was shown by Almighty GOD and St. Nicholas to a Monk of Evesham Abbey in the days of King Richard I, and the year of our Lord 1196

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In a monastery called Evesham there was a certain young man, who had faithfully devoted himself to the life of a monk. Soon after his conversion he fell into a grievous sickness, and for fifteen months was afflicted with great bodily weakness. He turned entirely from food and drink, so that sometimes, for periods of nine days or more, he could take nothing but a little warm water. Whatever was attempted for his comfort or cure, nothing helped him; on the contrary it seemed to make him worse. He lay sick in his bed, deprived of bodily strength, so that he could not move from one place to another without the help of servants. During the last three months of his illness he grew steadily worse. However, as the Feast of Easter approached, suddenly he began to improve slightly and walk about the infirmary, supported upon his staff.

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On the evening of Maundy Thursday, when the office of Our Lord Jesu Christ's betrayal and passion was solemnly sung with great devotion, leaning upon his staff, he went to the church with those of his brethren who, being ill, had been with him in the infirmary, and there the convent nightly service and lauds were offered up to Our Lord.

He was granted by the heavenly grace such deep repentance and such comfort that his holy devotion exceeded all bounds, and he could not refrain from weeping and praising God from midnight till the six o'clock bell in the morning.

First he recalled with worship and joy the mercies Our Lord had shown to mankind; then he remembered with sorrow and tears his past offences and sins, and the state of his present imperfection. About six in the morning he requested two of the brothers to be called, one

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after the other, who had power to hear confessions and to give absolution to penitents. To them he made full confession of all his sins, of the least omission in his religion or in the commandments of God, and with great contrition and many tears he desired absolution and obtained it.

Then one of them asked him why he sorrowed and wept so immoderately, for they all supposed that he must realise that he would soon pass out of this world. He said that he did not feel at such an extremity, and to the brother who enquired of him he replied: "Sir, you must understand that last night, when we were together in the Chapter House my soul experienced such great sweetness and gladness that this alone would sustain me!" He asked, also, if it were the rule in their order for the priors that night to administer penance to the

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brethren, in holy vestments. When the brother heard him enquire this, he felt sure it was a sign of the great weakness of mind into which his infirmity and immoderate weeping and fasting had brought him. But with remarkable wisdom and discretion he commended him to Our Lord, asking him no questions, and went his way.

The sick brother spent all that day in lauding and praising God. The next night, after he had slept a little while, he rose up from his bed, and when the Chapter bell was rung to call them to matins, he went to the church as he did the day before. How he behaved himself in the church, and when he left it, will be told later in his own words.

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How he lay prostrate upon the floor of the Chapter House as if he were dead

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On the following day, Good Friday, when the monks came into church to say prime, as they stopped before the Chapter House they saw this sick brother lying prostrate and barefoot before the abbot's seat, his face flat to the ground as though asking mercy. The brethren wondered at seeing him thus, and running to lift him up they found him apparently lifeless, without movement in any member of his body. His eyes were sunk deep into his head, and his eyes and nose were bloody, as though someone had smeared them with blood; and they all believed that he was dead. His feet were cold, but the rest of his body was found to be warm. No breathing could be noticed for a long time, but at last a feeble breathing and beating of his heart were perceived. Then they washed his head, breast, hands, and feet with cold water.

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At first they saw his body tremble a little, but again that ceased and he lay insensible. For a long time they mused and doubted what they could do for him, while he lay, not really dead, yet scarcely living. At last they decided to put him to bed, to be kept there under strict and careful observation.

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Of the Bloody Figure on the Cross

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Meanwhile the brothers wondered how such a sudden mishap had come to the sick monk; still more they wondered how it occurred that he had managed to get to the Chapter House from the monastery without help. Other things that now follow, which I will relate, are to be dreaded, feared, and reverenced far above anything yet told.

They heard afterwards, not without great astonishment, that the figure of Our Lord's body affixed to a cross—which figure and cross are wont to be devoutly kissed and worshipped yearly in the convent in remembrance of Our Lord's passion,—was found freshly bleeding from the great wound in the right side, and also at the right foot. Before Lent the sexton of the church had let down this cross to the ground

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and left it till Good Friday, between the altar and the wall. Still more wonderful was the fact that the staff and shoes of this sick brother were found at the same place.

All the brothers came together into the Chapter House greatly astonished at these things, and after consultation all that were there took penance with great contrition of heart, and, lying prostrate and weeping in the church, said the seven penitential psalms supplicating Our Lord's mercy.

All that day, Good Friday, and the night following, and the next day almost till sunset, the sick brother continued in the same state. The brethren opened his mouth by force and gave him juices of various spices and herbs to relieve him; but whatever was put into his mouth came out again, as though his throat were stopped up. They applied plasters also to his

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breast and arms, but all in vain. They pricked him with needles, and chafed the soles of his feet, but there was no sign of life except a little redness of the cheeks and a slight warmth of the body. The colour of his face was often ashy, and then would revive again wonderfully. They also caused a great horn to be blown in the room, but to no purpose.

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How he came to himself again on Easter Eve at about Compline time

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On the morrow, which was Easter Day, at the hour when the monks came together for the collation and compline, his eyelids began to move slightly as if they had been bathed in hot water. And at last, water like tears came down from his eyes onto his cheeks. Those who were with him, seeing this, called for the brethren, thinking that he would soon pass from this world. They also saw his lips move a little, his cheeks being compressed as if he had received and swallowed some sweet thing that had dropped into his mouth; and after that, a flowing of tears again. Also his breast was seen to sink low many times, like a sleeping man who wept. Soon after, it seemed that he murmured certain words in his throat, but he could only utter them in a voice scarcely audible and not intelligible.

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Then his spirit began little by little to return to him, and these words were the first that could be understood:

"Oh, Sancta Maria! oh, Sancta Maria!" and again, "Oh, my Lady, Sancta Maria; oh, my Lady, Sancta Maria!" He repeated these words many times. "For what sin," he said, "do I lose so great a joy?" And again, "My Lady, Sancta Maria, where shall I find again so great a joy as that I now leave?"

These words and many others, he repeated often, like a man in his sleep, his eyes closed. I knew not for what great joy he sorrowed and wept, because he had departed from it. Suddenly, like one who had awaked from a deep sleep, he lifted up his head and began to weep bitterly, and sobbed sorrowfully, his tears running down his cheeks; and joining his hands

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together, he raised himself and sat up. Then he put his head in his hands, down on his knees, and began again to wail and to grieve most piteously, and did not cease for a long time.

One of the brothers who was with him asked what caused him to weep so sorely and how he felt. He rested a little while and at last softly said to him: "Well,—well,—very well I was hitherto, but now I am ill,—very ill." And he wept and sorrowed again more than ever.

It would be too long to tell, and also impossible to remember, everything that he said then, and how he wept; so we leave that now, and intend to gather together, shortly, the things that we heard him tell in great contrition of heart and mind, when he had fully come to himself again.

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How he sought for his shoes and staff, and how reverently he worshipped the cross

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During his lamentations he essayed with great strength once, twice, and thrice, to open his eyes, which were still closed,—and at last they opened. Then he began to feel with both hands for his staff, that he had left in church. And when it could not be found, he said: "Let us find our staff, and take our shoes by the pillar, and go again to the infirmary." (An infirmary amongst religious men is a place, or house, ordained for sick brothers.)

Some of them said to him, "Behold, brother, you are in the infirmary and in your bed; and lo! your staff and shoes are here ready." Then he asked: "O how did we come hither, and when? Were we not just now in the church together at matins?" Then his brethren told him that he had been there two days, and tomorrow would be Easter Day. When he heard this he

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began to weep still more, and said, "Oh! brethren, should we not have worshipped Our Lord's cross on Good Friday? And yet we have not worshipped it together!" When he heard from his brethren that Our Lord's cross was worshipped the day before, and that he could not be there because of his illness, he said to them: "After I entered the church I felt no illness—but I pray you now that I may go and worship the cross." Then a silver cross was brought to him, which he reverently clasped, and with tears watered the foot of the cross, and some standing by wearied as he thanked Our Lord and Redeemer, and the Father, and the Holy Ghost, for innumerable benefits; many of which he rehearsed singly for himself, and universally for holy church, and also for all degrees and conditions of Christian people. For his enemies, if there were any, and for the enemies of his

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friends, he offered up wonderful prayers and supplications. Thirty times or more, I think, he must have bowed his head to the feet of the cross, with tears and sobbing, so that often his voice ceased praying.

The words which he used in his supplications were so ready and prompt, so full of reason and good sense, that it appeared rather as if he read them than said them. His sweet prayers stirred many that heard him to weeping and devotion, and whenever we remember them they increase in us great inward compunction, and love and devotion to Our Lord, to our brethren, and to all men. After every short prayer he lauded the great humility and goodness of Our Redeemer, amongst other benefits.

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How he told one of the brothers whom he dearly loved, what he had seen

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Meanwhile the bell rang for collation, and the brothers who had brought him the cross left him. Then he said: "Now I know that this is indeed the holy time of Easter!" What caused him to say so, shall be explained afterwards. There remained with him a certain brother who loved him well in the bonds of holy religion, and was able to influence him by a wise and meek bearing, though the sick monk was still in a kind of stupor, and was dazed by the things he had experienced, both those that had befallen him before he fell into the trance, and the things that he had seen spiritually in another world. As I have said, he remembered and related many things separately and particularly, which the aforesaid brother who was with him kept deep in his heart, telling him openly, in return, of the

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things that had befallen him before the trance. Afterwards, at his leisure and by diligence, the brother learned everything more completely and in due order.

Nevertheless the monk would tell no one everything that he had seen in his long trance of two days and two nights. In recounting what he had seen he would mention some of his visions, but shortly after he had begun to speak he would cease, and no persuasion could induce him to tell any more.

Nor are we even capable of relating all that we know he saw, and that he told to a few persons present in whose devotion he put special trust. Neither can we reveal the purport of his visions so clearly by writing and telling, as he could and did.

Among other things, he was asked if he

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hoped to recover from his illness, or live any longer in this bodily life. He replied: "I shall live long enough, and I am fully recovered from my sickness."

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How he was Persuaded by Some of the Brothers to take Food after so long a Fast

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In the evening he was urged to take some food after such a long fast. He said: "Set before us the bread, and a little honey that was left the other time." When this was done, he broke his fast with a very spare refection. And so he remained awake, in prayer and tears, till the hour of the night when they rang to matins.

When the brothers rose to matins, he went with them, as if he had risen with Our Lord, who at one time rose from death and life at about that very hour. And so he came to the church, to the joy and marvel of those who saw him, and, without support or help, he entered the choir as he had not done for eleven months. There he remained in great devotion and tears till matins were ended, and throughout the celebration of the Resurrection of Our Lord,

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which is wont to be enacted every year visibly in the church, showing how the angel appeared, and spoke to the women at the sepulchre of the victorious Resurrection of their King, and commanded that they should tell His disciples of it; and lastly, how Our Lord appeared in the figure of a gardener to His well-beloved Mary Magdalen, and named her Maria. Throughout, the monk remained until the masses were done, and he had received the holy communion of Christian men.

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How he Related a Part of what he had Seen to Two of his Confessors

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After this, having received Our Lord's precious body, he was joyful and lighthearted, and his brethren brought him into the colloquium, which is a place where they may converse together. There they came about him in numbers, desiring him to tell them all that had befallen him and what he had seen, for their spiritual edification and comfort. For all who had heard his words the day before when he had fully come to himself, and had seen his continual weeping, realized that many great and marvellous things had been revealed to him. They asked him with great persistence, but he put them off for some time. At last, as was said before, he related those things to his two confessors, to whom he was confessed on Maunday Thursday, to both separately. Thereafter, what he told them with great weep-

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ing and sighing, which sometimes prevented his speaking, was committed to memory and written down. Some things he told to them both; some only to one, and some only to the other: but always with great meekness and careful consideration. He began as now follows.

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What was his Special Petition to God and how a Certain Person Appeared to him in his Sleep

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When I was troubled, as you saw me, with wearisome and grievous weakness, I blessed Our Lord evermore with heart and soul, and thanked Him that He had vouchsafed to chasten me, though unworthy, with Fatherly chastisement. Having abandoned all hope of recovering my bodily health, I began slowly, in whatever way I could, to make ready that I might the sooner and lighter escape the pains and sorrows of the world to come, and that I might find the rest of everlasting life when I should be called out of my body. As I meditated upon these things, to the best of my power, after a little while a thought fell into my mind that I should pray Our Lord God that He would vouchsafe to reveal to me in some way the state of the world to come, and the condition of the souls that have passed from

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their bodies after this life. This clearly known, I might better understand what it was that, as I supposed, was shortly to be dreaded, and what I might hope for after, when I should pass from this world to that world. By this means I sought to establish myself in the dread and love of God, as long as I should live in this doubtful life.

And so, on a certain night in the beginning of the Lent that is passed, a wonderful person appeared to me in my sleep, standing by me and saying, "Oh, son, great is thy devotion in prayer, and great thy perseverance; wherefore thy continual prayer and meek demeanour is not unheeded before the presence of God in his goodness. From henceforth be of good comfort, and continue devoutly in prayer; and for greater strength seek the help and prayers

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of some religious persons. If you do so, doubtless you will soon obtain your petition."

Then he named some persons, and their offices, saying "Know well that it will profit you much to have the prayers of such people, whom God in His goodness is wont to hear right gladly. Send also to the neighbouring convent of nuns that you know well," and named it—"beseeching them to pray for you. God is much pleased with their holy purpose and laudable conversation, wherefore His goodness greatly favours their wills and desires."

When this had been said to me, both the sleep that I was in and the person that spoke, departed from me. I awoke suddenly, and steadfastly kept this vision in mind, and as soon as I could, I desired the persons to pray for me—not giving them the reason of my request. Then six weeks passed. On the night before

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Maunday Thursday, as you remember, when I had taken penance of you and your companion in the Chapter House—that is to say six stripes from you and six from him for that day, and five more for the *Sext Ferias* of last Lent, from which I was compelled to abstain at the time through sickness,—I was filled with such abundance of grace, of tears, and of sweetness of heart at receiving that penance, as no words can express. Even the day after, the recollection of it was so sweet to me that I often wept. And then the next night, at the hour to rise for matins, after great sighing, I fell into a pleasant sleep.

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How he Was Warned in his Sleep to Worship the Cross of Our Lord

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As I slept I heard a voice, but knew not whence it came, saying to me, "Arise, go into the chapel to the altar that is dedicated and hallowed to the worship of St. Lawrence and of all martyrs. There, behind that altar, you will find a cross, and an image of thy Redeemer affixed thereto, redeeming the world by His death. Go to that cross meekly and devoutly, and kiss it, in remembrance of thy Saviour, and offer to Him with meek heart a sacrifice of prayers, knowing well that it will be acceptable to God and a wholesome devotion to thee, in which thou shalt feel great delight."

After this I awoke and went into the church with the brothers to hear matins. When they had begun matins, I met with a senior that you know well in the church porch, who was one of those from whom I took penance the night

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before. When I saw him I made a sign to him to discipline me as he had done before. So together we went quietly into the Chapter House, and with one assent we gladly returned. Then another senior met us, at the same place where I met the first, when I made the sign to have penance. He beckoned with his hand that I should tarry a little while. Then I left the brother with whom I had entered the church, and who was sitting apart, and went forth alone to the altar that had been shown me in my sleep. When I was near the altar, I put off my shoes and knelt on my knees on the pavement, and bowed my head many times to the ground, and then went behind the altar to seek the cross that I had been told of. Truly I did not know before that any cross was let down there; nevertheless I found it, as it had been told me. Soon I was dissolved in tears of de-

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votion, and lying all prostrate I worshipped that holy cross full devoutly, saying many prayers. Then I came kneeling to the cross, and again offered devout supplications and thanks to God, often kissing the feet of the crucifix, and busily watering them with my tears.

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How he Saw the Right Side of the Crucifix Bleeding Down to Him, and the Right Foot also, and how Two Lights Appeared There

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Meanwhile, as I lifted up my eyes, which were sore with weeping, to the face of the crucifix, I felt some drops falling on me; I put my fingers there and knew by the redness it was blood. Also I beheld the right side of the image of Our Lord's body, and it welled out with blood, as a man's flesh bleeds when it is cupped. The light in the place where I saw this was dim, for it was behind the altar about midnight. But I saw two lights shining at both sides of the cross, like two tapers burning brightly. I looked to find whence that light could come, and could not see its source.

Then I took in my open hand, I know not how many drops of that precious blood, and diligently anointed my eyes, ears, and nostrils. Lastly I put one drop of that blessed blood to my lips, and through the great desire and devotion of my heart, I swallowed it.

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Whether I offended God in so doing I do not know. The remainder I held in my hand, purposing to have kept it. I also saw that the right foot of the crucifix was bloody.

Yesterday when I came to myself again and found none of that precious blood in my hands, I sorrowed sorely, and ever shall, for the loss of such a great and precious treasure.

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How he Came Into the Chapter House, and Took Penance, and how he was Wrapped There

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To satisfy you, I shall now relate some other things that occurred.

The two lights that I saw shining on each side of the crucifix, suddenly passed thence to the south of the altar. I was then kneeling at the north, at the right of the crucifix, and seeing the lights pass to the other side, I followed, hoping that I should see some spiritual thing there. When I came thither I heard behind me the voice of the same old father that I met last in the church porch, of whom I desired to receive penance, and who bade me tarry a little while. Then I left all that I saw there, and (I know not how) came into the Chapter House. When I had said my Confiteor, as the custom is, and he had prayed for me and absolved me with this blessing: "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy

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Ghost, Amen,"—he gave me penance six times, as before. I desired him again to let me repeat my confession and take penance of him, for at every stroke that he gave me instead of sorrow and pain, there came inestimable and incredible sweetness of joyful comfort. But he would give me no more, so I rose up. He went in his albus and sat down in the abbot's seat in the Chapter House, and I came and lay prostrate before him, saying my Veni, and repeating my Confiteor, and again he said over me "Misereatur tui omnipotens Deus," and so absolved me again with this blessing: "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," and when he had said "Amen," there came to me a certain worshipful father, a senior, who had the face and presence of an angel, clothed in white, brighter and whiter than snow. The hair of his head was the same, and

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his stature of mid height. He raised me up from where I lay, and spoke only these words: "Follow me!" Then he took me by the right hand, surely and softly clasping my hand in his.

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How he Felt Himself First Wrapped in Spirit

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"Here," he said, "I first felt myself wrapped in spirit." Then his brother confessor to whom he imparted all these things, asked him: "Do you still believe, brother, that I or the other senior gave you penance that night as you say, or went into the Chapter House in albus?" He wondered at his asking, and said, "Do you not know that this is the truth that I have told you?" Then his confessor said to him again: "No such things were done by us, nor might they be done; for the Order does not allow us to go at that time of night into the Chapter House to give penance."

He replied: "I have believed without doubt hitherto that it was of you that I received penance and absolution as above narrated; certain I am that I received them in the Chapter House, and from men showing your persons and like-

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ness, and that I was awake and in my body and with a whole mind, for I felt and heard the strokes, and I well understood and discerned the voices of those that prayed for and absolved me, as I should have known both of yours. The first night, when I went out of the Chapter House, I intended to remain in the same place until morning, so great was the gladness of my heart and the devotion that I had received there; but I was somewhat troubled and disturbed by the noise of the convent when they went out of church after matins, and lest I should be reproved for presumption if I tarried there all night, I went with our brethren home to bed. As I went out of the Chapter House I met Brother Marten.

"That night I lay awake till matins of the next night, in great lightness of spirit. Then the next night after, when I was at matins,

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about the beginning of the third nocturne, I left the altar where I was praying, hearing a sound like a man smiting the stony pavement with his foot, and so went into the Chapter House. It was the same hour at which last night we went thither for the same cause. All the other things befell me as I have told you. Only I can in no way remember how I came the last time from the chapel that I was in, to the Chapter House. Without a staff I could not make my way there, and I know I left myself at the sanctuary of the altar. How I traversed the way that lies between the Chapter House and the chapel, or how I climbed the four or five steps, I cannot remember. When I came to myself again, those things which I had experienced bodily at the altar and the cross were so fresh in my mind that I expected to find myself there rather than in the Chapter House."

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A Digression

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Concerning these persons by whom he was brought into the Chapter House, and to whom he said his Confiteor, who prayed for him, absolved him, and administered penance to him in the likeness of his own brethren, they were doubtless holy angels, who thus appeared and so acted by the will of God. Touching the worshipful old father whose face was like an angel and his clothing whiter than snow, who took him by the hand when he lay prostrate in the Chapter House and said to him, "Follow me:" it was the holy and blessed Bishop Saint Nicholas, whom he specially loved and daily worshipped, as will afterwards be made clear.

And now, after this digression, let us return to the narrative.

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How This Monk was Wrapped, and how he Followed his Leader, Saint Nicholas

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"Gladly then," said the monk, "I went with that worshipful old father who, by the command he uttered, and leading me by the hand, took me to accompany him on his way; and all the while that I lay destitute of my bodily wits, we went together hand in hand. That was from midnight of Maundy Thursday which precedes the morning of Good Friday, at which time I was ravished in spirit as I lay in the Chapter House, until the evening of the Saturday following,—at which time as you saw, I was shut out from the secret rest and spiritual knowledge that I had enjoyed, and returned to this worldly conversation."

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How Saint Nicholas Brought this Monk to the First Place of Pains

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We went afterwards by a plain way in a right path, till we came to a certain region that was wide and broad, very horrible and ghastly to behold, foul and miry with thick clay. There we saw an infinite number of men and women, not to be counted, cast forth to suffer diverse indescribable pains. There was an innumerable company of men and women of every kind, of every profession, and of every estate. There the doers of all sins were subjected to various kinds of pains according to the diversity of sins and the quality of persons. I heard and saw in the broad and open space of that field, whose limits are invisible, the wretched companies of men and women, bound together in herds, suffering equally according to the qualities of their sins and the kinds of their professions, crying out in their great and grie-

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vous pains. And of all those that I saw in that place of pains, thus being made ready for heaven, I knew and understood for what sins they were being punished, and how those sins were weighed and the measure and quality of the satisfaction which they had to render, either by contrition and confession of their offences, or by the remedies and help of other benefits done for them. Of those that I saw there, I knew that they were comforted somewhat by the hope of everlasting bliss, which they all hoped at some time to reach. Some I saw patiently suffering great pains; but the good works which they had done conscientiously were recorded and put to their credit, as was the great trust which they showed, that they would eventually come to everlasting bliss, and which enabled them to bear lightly in spirit the foul and horrible pains that afflicted

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them. They wept and sorrowed and cried out for grief and pain; but as they went further, their sufferings were diminished and made more easy to bear.

I also beheld many who tried to escape from the place where they were being tormented, hastening to go the way that lay open before them. But from beneath, as if the ground had opened, scorching flames shot up that enveloped them, and the devils that met with them beat them sorely with scourges and forks and other kinds of torments, and so all their woes returned upon them again. Nevertheless, although beaten and broken and inwardly burnt, they escaped again, and as has been said, the further they went the less were their pains, and the easier. In this progress some benefited greatly, some only a little, some hardly at all. To some again the advance was no profit, but

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a miserable failure, for they went from cruel pains to worse. Each of them was helped or hindered on his way according to previous merits and deservings, or was relieved by the benefits being done for him by friends in this world.

As for the things that my mind conceived of there, or of which I was informed by speaking with some of the sufferers, I will openly declare them, as will be seen from what follows.

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Of the Great Diversities of Pains

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I saw an infinite diversity of pains there. Some were roasted at the fire; some were fried in a pan; some were pierced with fiery nails even to their bones and to the loosening of their joints; some were soaked in baths of pitch and brimstone with a horrible stench, and others in molten lead and brass and other metals. Some were gnawed by the venomous teeth of wonderful worms; others were thrown down in serried rows, and smitten through with sharp stakes and pales with points of fire. Some were hung on gallows; others were dragged with hooks, and some were sorely beaten with scourges. In such like terrible ways they were all torn and wracked.

Many of these persons were bishops and abbots and other dignitaries; some had enjoyed high distinction in spiritual, some in temporal

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careers, some in religion—and such were visited with double the sorrows of other people. I saw those who had been simple priests, monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen, ordained to much less suffering, in proportion to the worldly dignity and prosperity they had enjoyed before. But some whom I knew in my life-time to have been judges and prelates were afflicted with specially bitter pains.

It were too long to tell singly of every person, what was suffered and wherefore it was suffered; but I will gather together some things of certain persons, their suffering before death and after death—for all this was made manifest to me of everyone there. But no human tongue could adequately describe even the lightest pains of that place, neither could the human mind conceive of them. As for the diversity and multiplicity of torments which they were put to, one

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after another,—truly they were innumerable! I take God to witness that if there were anyone who had done me or my friends all the harm and injuries that it were possible for man to suffer in this life, short of death,—if such an enemy were put to the pains that I saw there, to endure long torment,—I would, if it were possible, suffer temporal death a thousand times for his deliverance. For in that place of torment, all the conditions are so painful, so full of sorrow and anguish, bitterness and wretchedness, as to be inconceivable.

Let us who are now alive in this world take heed and consider how greatly we ought to devote ourselves to chastening our wicked natures, and to amending our living,—also how much we should endeavour to keep the commandments of God, and to do good works; by which, and by the mercy of God, we may earn deliverance from such great evils.

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Also let us remember that our dear friends, as father and mother, sister and brother, and others of our loved ones, who once were here, and are now there being sorely punished for their offences, may be delivered the sooner by our good deeds, and by works of mercy and pity done by us for their redemption and help.

Before I make mention of the sore pains and torments of some particular persons that I found and recognized,—and they also knew me,—I will shortly write here the places of pains that I beheld as I went about with deep compassion, after we had passed the first place of pains. To earthly sight the extent of this first place would seem impossible to traverse; but we, that is to say my leader and I, passed round the borders of it, as we did of the other painful places of torment; but we did not enter into the heart of them, though it seemed to me we might have done so without any fear of harm.

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Of the Second Place of Purgatory

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After we had passed the first place of purgatory, we came to the second, which was separated from the first place, and in which was a high hill almost to the clouds. Lightly and swiftly we ascended this hill, and on the further side of it was a very deep, dark valley, with bogs and swamps in all directions, whose extent no one could see. And in the lower part of the valley was a broad pool of horrible black water; out of that foul pool rose a mist of indescribable stench. On the side of the hill which hung over the pond, a horrible scorching fire raged, flaming up to the heavens. On the other side of the hill was such extreme cold, with snow, and hail, and every kind of cruel storm, that methought I had perceived nothing so painful and cruel as that cold was. The whole length of that valley, and both sides of the

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hill which had that horrible heat and cold, were as full of souls as hives swarming with bees. This is the common routine of torment for those souls: First they are drowned in the stinking pool; thence having been taken up and cast into the fire, they are swept up on high into the air by the force of the fiercely raging flames, as sparks from a burning furnace, and so are let down on the other side of the hill into the piercing cold of the snow and hail and driving storms; afterwards they are again cast down headlong into the sickening stench of the pond, and are again taken up and hurled into the burning fire. Some of them are punished longer in the fire than others, and some in the cold; others are kept longer in the stench of the pool. Some I saw were bound and compressed in the midst of flames of fire, as grapes in a wine press.

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These were the conditions of torment of all in that second place. They were compelled to go through the pool from the beginning to the end to fulfill their purgation. Nevertheless great and manifold were the distinctions and diversity of their pains and torments. Some had lighter punishments than others, and some were granted a swifter passage; and this was due to the merits of their lives when on earth, and also to the participation and help of the friends they left behind at their death.

Such as had been guilty of great offences and sins, or were seldom or slowly helped by their friends on earth, were held in pains a long time. The nearer they all came to the end of the place of purgatory, the lighter and easier grew their pains. The most cruel pains were at the beginning,—although as I said before, not all equally so. Similarly, the pains and tor-

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ments of this second place were much harder and sharper than those we saw in the first place, and those in the former place were punished more severely than those in the latter.

Furthermore, I found and recognized many more here, who had once been my acquaintances, than I did in the first place; in both places I spoke with some. The measure of their stature appeared smaller than when I knew them in this world, having as it seemed, been lessened and thinned by torments; some had nothing left of their bulk. Notwithstanding this difference of their forms, it did not hinder my recognition, for I recalled them as promptly and readily as when they lived with us in this world.

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How Saint Margaret Delivered the Soul of a Sinful Woman from the Devils

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And now it pleases me to tell of a certain fair deed and work of great pity and mercy, the sight of which was a cause of sorrow and also of consolation, and which may be a noble example and teaching to all the world, why people should have God and his holy saints, both men and women, in worship and reverence

While I beheld and marvelled at those things I have related, and at many others, and had long talks there with those that I had known before, I heard afar a great noise and cry, as if thieves had taken booty, or as if they had overcome their enemy, and followed them with foul mockings and scornings. And lo, after that noise and cry, followed a mighty company of wicked spirits leading with them, to hell, as they hoped, the soul of a woman lately departed

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from her body. Oh, good God, what pains and torments those cruel enemies laid upon her! And the more they knew her to be without help, the harder they were with her. What man would ever believe how those wicked spirits and tyrants of the devil cast that soul among them, as a tennis ball, with fiery instruments, from one to another. Or who can possibly describe to any believing man how her body and bowels were smitten through with fiery darts by those cruel tormentors! But as God is my witness, such intense and horrible pains and torments which they cruelly inflicted on her, I beheld and saw her suffer.

These things did not appear to me as to a man who sees naturally with earthly eyes,—that is to say seeing only the outward pains suffered in the body,—but I saw also what they felt inwardly, good or evil, and with what woe or

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gladness they were smitten in their souls,—all this was made plain to me.

So this unhappy soul, what with the present sorrow that she suffered, and the fear of everlasting damnation, was in great anguish. There was no comforting hope of ultimate escape for her,—desolate, destitute of all help and succour! Oh! bitterness of all bitterness, the most bitter!—whom no trust nor help relieves or succours, while endless desperation increases!

It was but the day before that she had left her mortal body, in which she had lived viciously; and now she was covered with the vesture of shame and villainy. Within she was bitten with the consciousness of shameful deeds, done wickedly, and without she was scourged by mocking and scorning devils. Truly she felt the fulfillment of the words of the holy man Job, saying of such persons:

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They spend their days in prosperity, and in a moment they go down to Sheol."

While this unhappy soul was going to be brought to hell by the victorious triumph of her enemies, and for the sinful and unlawful lusts of her body, lo, a great light came down from heaven, by the bright beams of which the wicked spirits and ministers of the devil were stupefied and made powerless, and fell down to the ground with the soul that they had captured. In this light a multitude of virgins came down in shining clothes, white as snow, set about with gold and precious stones. I will not mention the grace and joy that there was in beholding their faces, for it was so great and inestimable, that I, who saw it, cannot remember how worthily to describe it. One, the fairest, I knew well, and that was the blessed virgin and martyr, Saint Margaret.

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As the wretched soul, who was more enthralled by her sins than by the devils, saw the blessed Saint, she began to cry miserably, and said: "Oh, blessed and precious Spouse of Christ! have mercy on me and help me, who justly for my own sins am in desperation, and rightly put to pains and torment. I acknowledge that in all my life I despised the commandments of God, and gave my body to unclean living. I have not loved God nor any of his saints, men or women, nor worshipped them; thee, only, of all the holy saints in heaven, I have ever loved truly, and every Saturday I offered up red candles before thine altar out of my own goods.

"Lately I left my evil habits of life, giving my mind and body wholly to thy love and worship; and I believed that by the remedy of confession all my sins had been washed away. But alas

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for sorrow! my confession was not sufficient to wash away so many great and foul sins, because I lacked the fervour of contrition and did not do worthy penance for my sins. Therefore they cleave fast to me, unforgiven, although I hoped to wipe them away by good works. Lo, therefore, my lady, and my sweetness and comfort, shall my visits and worship which I faithfully performed to thee, count for nought, and shall I thus perish not only to myself but also to thee to whom alone I have honestly devoted myself?"

These things and many others she said, with sore and bitter weeping and crying, more than anyone would believe. I take God to be my witness that I saw the tears break out of her eyes like hailstones. While she thus sorrowed, the glorious martyr, Saint Margaret, turned to her virgins that were there with her,

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and said, "Oh, most sweet sisters, you see now the peril of this woman, sometime my servant, and you know also the importunate malice of the devils, who pretend to many reasons for claiming her. Now let us do the only thing which is left to help her. Pray we now to the everlasting Judge and meek Redeemer, that He, who may do all things, will vouchsafe to help this wretched soul, as He knows best of His goodness, and at our desire deliver her, who was once redeemed by His precious blood, from the cruel power and venomous teeth of these wicked spirits."

When the blessed virgin and martyr, Saint Margaret, said these words, instantly all those virgins bowed down to the ground on their knees, and lifted up their hands praying for that sinful woman, to their immortal Spouse, Our Blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. And

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as they perceived that their petition had been granted by God, they rose up from prayer.

Then this blessed virgin, Saint Margaret, with unyielding countenance and unshaken soul, came near, threatening the wicked spirits, and making her sleeve like a scourge, lifted it up as if she would have smitten them. They fled away, hither and thither, like a whirlwind, leaving the bound soul of the woman. Suddenly on the farther side appeared a ditch full of boiling water up to the brink. The blessed and merciful helper, Saint Margaret, said to the woman, "Here now, must thou fulfill thy penance, which thou shouldst have done before in thy life; and by my prayers thou shalt have much help and relief from thy pains, and when thy sins are fully purged and cleansed thou shalt be admitted by me to deserve everlasting joy and bliss."

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It cannot be told how joyfully the sinful woman received the words addressed to her, by which she knew there would come an end to her penance, and that afterwards she might feel the goodness and mercy of God.

This victorious deed done, the glorious sight of virgins ascended to heaven again.

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How a Goldsmith Was Saved by Saint Nicholas

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Here follows another miracle full of great mercy and pity, wrought by the excellent might and power of the blessed Bishop, Saint Nicholas. I will tell of a noble deed, a work lately done to a servant of his, who not long ago I knew well and loved familiarly for some good things done by him, and which therefore I tell with the more pleasure. This man that I now speak of, who was a goldsmith by trade, first told me the name and title of my leader, with whom I went hand in hand. I may seem to depart somewhat from the order of narration, because I said above that before I mentioned the torments and pains of any persons particularly, I would shortly describe the places of pains that were shown to me. But that I will afterwards reveal to the profit of those who care to hear or read this revelation.

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I suppose you remember how a certain goldsmith, a citizen of this place, was suddenly struck down and died—and it was no secret that it befell him through drinking too much wine. Therefore it cannot but be said that this man must be classed among those of whom Saint John, the apostle, specially speaks in his epistle: "There is sin unto death. I say no man should pray for him who continues in sin to his death, and so in deadly sin departs from life."

So this man not only abode in the sin of drunkenness until death, but died through that very sin, which is the cause and seed of all evil. As a certain wise man said: Drunkenness excuses no vice. This man whose sin we now speak of (that it may be shunned and dreaded), was ever prone to drunkenness in his old days, and for the last three days that he ever saw in

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this world, he continued almost daily in that same sin. If I had known for certain that he had died from such a cause, what could I have felt but that it were worthier not to pray for him, since my prayers would be void before the righteous Judge, and of no help to him? Nevertheless, I used to pray for him, though without heart, feeling dubious of one who had met so hapless an end. It was ordained of God that this goldsmith should be in the second place of pains. There I beheld and recognised him, and greatly marvelled to see him in better hope than many others that I saw, and suffering his pains lightly.

When my leader noticed how earnestly I gazed at him, he asked me if I knew him.

And I said, "Full well."

Then he said, "If you know him, speak to him."

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Then the goldsmith looked at us both, and recognising us, came with a gesture of untold joy and gladness to my leader, and with both hands spread open, bowed down his body often, worshipping him, and greeting him with innumerable thanks for his benefits and goodness to him. Meanwhile I saluted him, and he in turn joyfully greeted me. Then I enquired how it was that he had so soon passed through the horrible pains which I knew by his appearance he had suffered. He answered thus.

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Here the Monk first Knew
that Saint Nicholas was
His Leader

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"My dear friend," he said; "all ye in the world believed me to be lost and damned, not knowing the goodness and mercy of my present lord, Saint Nicholas, who would not suffer me, though an unhappy and unprofitable servant of his, to be damned and lost everlastingly."

Then I answered, "Truly, as you say, all your friends sorrowed that you died so suddenly, and we were greatly abashed, supposing that you had been damned because you had no help from the holy sacraments of the church before your death. That I find you otherwise than we believed, makes me glad, and I would fain hear how and why you escaped eternal damnation after such a death."

He answered, "I will gladly tell you whatever you desire."

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The Goldsmith tells the Monk in Purgatory he Died Suddenly, and yet Was Saved

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"You know how I lived when I was in the world, as far as those things were concerned that were open to man's sight, also that I continued in the foul sin of drunkenness—an old failing of mine—to my last end. Nevertheless it was against my will, and it distressed me much that I could not abandon the vice. Often I rose against myself, determined to cast out and leave the foul sin of drunkenness that held me. But what with the lust of drink, and the importunity of friends, I was persuaded to drink according to my old way, and was overcome and drawn and bound again into the old sinful habit by my own insatiable appetite. But for all this, by the mercy of God, Who wills that no man shall perish, I paid such devotion to my most blessed lord, Saint Nicholas, whom now you follow, and whose parishioner I was,

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that on no occasion did I forsake his worship, but remembered it most devoutly. However much I gave way to drunkenness, I used always to be at matins, as they rang; often I would be there before the parish priest. Also I supplied a lamp in Saint Nicholas' chapel, at my own cost. And such ornaments as were necessary for the church, I would diligently maintain,—lights or other things, as I had been his familiar servant or clerk. And when I had not sufficient to do it out of my own means, I would persuade others in the parish to help, and what other men or women gave I took to buy necessities with, and spent it honourably.

"Also, twice a year, at Christmas and Easter, I would wholly confess all my sins, bowed before our Parish Priest, taking penance for them, and fulfilling it diligently, in part. But I did not observe all those things that I was

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commanded by my spiritual father, for often I left undone something that I should have done. By the commandment of my spiritual father I fasted in Advent as I did in Lent, and to the days of Advent I added of my own free will, as many days before Advent as would make up the number of days in Lent. And on Christmas day I would communicate, and receive the holy sacrament of Our Lord's precious Body and Blood.

"But alas for sorrow! On that holy day of Our Lord's birth, when I should have been more holy and devout in my living than at other times, I turned instead to other works and occupations and worldly customs. It therefore happened, as also in my last days, that that wicked angel of the devil, Satan, who is the cause and kindler of all evil, scorned me, and he would have brought triumphant tidings of my

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utter damnation to his father the devil, if the mercy and goodness of my lord Saint Nicholas had not withstood him; therefore to him be thanksgiving for evermore from all his true servants that he freed and delivered me. And even as I should have been damned and cruelly punished, according to my deserts, just so leniently and mercifully has he nourished and sustained me.

"On Christmas day, after I had received the good Lord, I cannot remember without great sorrow and heaviness that I was drawn by the evil custom, as I said before, into drunkenness again that day, to the great injury and wrong of such a Lord, Whom I had received a little before into my soul. On the morrow I went to church as I used to do, sorely bewailing the foul wickedness which I had committed the day before, and purposing to do it no more;

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but it was as void as vain. For through the habit of drinking, and the devils stirring me thereto, I was destitute, and had lost the stability of virtue, and the mighty purpose of soberness that I had conceived; and so I did not fulfill my resolve in deed, but as I had done yesterday, so I did again today; and through the pleasure of drinking, fell down again into drunkenness.

"The third day after Christmas day, I still had not left my old habit of drinking, and had lost the virtue of soberness and all my wits also. When it was night, I left the place where I had been drinking, and came home and went to bed as I was, clothed and shod, and slept a little. When I awoke, I would have risen, and said that I believed it had rung to matins. But my wife told me nay, so I lay down again. Then I fell into a deep sleep, and soon after death took me.

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"I will tell you how I felt death suddenly come upon me. A certain devil that tempted and stirred me to the vice of drunkenness, thought to himself that if I died in such peril he would draw me to hell without contradiction, presuming then to have power to do what he liked with me owing to my obedience in consenting to that vice. Again, he dreaded much lest I should at any time prevail against him by the merits of my patron, Saint Nicholas, or by amendment of my living if I lived longer; so by his presumptuous power he cruelly strangled me. I felt him go, like an owl, into my mouth, which so often I had wickedly opened to drink, and so through my throat he slyly came down to my heart. Soon I knew it was the devil. Notwithstanding, I was yet mindful of the mercies of God, and of my own wretchedness, and with fixed purpose

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I vowed in my mind to God, that I would purely and wholly confess me of all my sins and utterly and forever forsake the habit of drunkenness. And for this vow I called on Saint Nicholas, as urgently as I could, to be my surety. Scarce the space of a moment was granted me for this resolution, and then the wicked spirit sat down upon my heart, and clasped it with his cursed arms on every side. He spat out of his mouth a horrible vomit of venom and spread it all over me, and so in the twinkling of an eye, he expelled me from my body.

"Afterwards I was dragged forth, through dark places, by the cruel spirits, who beat me, rent me, staked me, drew me, burnt me, and carried me with them, I know not where, but, as they intended, to everlasting torments. Then my most dear and merciful advocate,

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Saint Nicholas, to whom I had called with all my heart in my last moments, and whom in my life I had always worshipped, though I were a sinner, came down and mightily delivered me out of their hands, and set me here in this place of purgatory for purification. And even though I suffer sore pains here, I count them light while I have no dread of the wicked spirits, and know that their tyranny and unbearable cruelty has ceased and been withdrawn from me. After this purgation I am secure of rest and everlasting joy by my lord Saint Nicholas, for evermore. And here, though I have to bear grievous torments and suffering, yet I am comforted and releaved again by his gentle and blessed visitation.

"At my trade, by which in the world I got a living for me and mine, in the beginning I often beguiled and deceived people for fear of

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suffering poverty. For that I am now bitterly punished, and the other day I suffered therefor much harder pains. Sometimes I have been cast down headlong into a great heap of blazing money, in which I burned intolerably, and have been compelled to devour those fiery pennies through my open mouth, so that I felt all my bowels burn within me. At other times I have been forced to count them, my hands and fingers sorely scorched by the touch of them. So by the great burning, and the parched heat of thirst, my bowels and my heart, my throat and my cheeks, grow wan, and quickly begin to waste away."

These and many other things I heard from him, as openly as if it had been told by any living man.

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How the Goldsmith also Told the Monk a Remedy against Sudden Death

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There is one thing which he told me, among other things, that I will not hide from the reader. I saw numberless people there, who had died suddenly, and who were being punished almost beyond measure. Many I knew had deliberately set themselves to sin, and when they came to do the deed, each of them said in his thoughts, "Now I will take my fill of this sin which I have so greatly desired"—and he was taken by the will of God to the utmost pains and punishment of death; illustrating the text in the gospel: Thou Fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; wherefore hast thou thought such wicked things against thy God and against thyself?

Nevertheless, as we have learned from him who told us, when they that are overtaken in the bitter sharpness of death, desire and pur-

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pose to amend their faults—(if they have time for repentance granted to them, and in their swift and hasty departure seek after God's mercy and after the help of his saints)—then their bitter death by the great mercy of God is counted a great cleansing of their sins, for which they would have suffered afterwards in places of torment and pains.

Further, I asked this Goldsmith if it were possible in any way for folk to shun and eschew sudden death. He answered in this wise to me.

"Oh, if I had known when I was living in the world, such things as I know now, I would have defended all the world from that great hurt and damage, and taught people how they might be secure and safe from sudden death. Verily, if Christian people would daily write on their foreheads and about their hearts, with their finger or in any other way, these words

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(which contain the mystery of the healing and salvation of mankind), "Jesus of Nazareth," without doubt the true people of Our Saviour Jesus Christ would be preserved harmless from such great peril; and after their death they would find the same words written openly and clearly on their hearts and on their foreheads, as a token and sign of great worship.

"I know that my household kept me unburied two days after my death, hoping that I should have revived, because of the colour and heat that was in my face and body, which was doubtless caused by the repletion of wine that I had drunk. My departing from this world was so hasty and swift, that my soul was past and gone from my body, ere my wife understood or knew it, or could send to call for the priest."

All these things that I have told, I learned from the Goldsmith there.

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How the Son of this Same Goldsmith told the Monk, after he had Come to himself again, that his Father had Appeared Thrice to his Mother after Death

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Fifteen days after I had seen and heard these things, the son of the same Goldsmith, a young man, came to me, weeping bitterly, and told me that his father had appeared to his mother three nights together as she was praying at home in her chamber, and he had bade her send to me to know how it was with him, and of his state, that she might be more comforted, and faithful and devout to help him; and also that by this knowledge she might be better able to guide herself and her household Godward. The same young man witnessed on oath that the third night of his father's appearing, he heard his mother talking a long time with him, sometimes enquiring, and sometimes answering him; and then afterwards she told me the words that he had said to her. The son said he heard no words when his father was

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speaking to her, but he waited patiently till they had done talking. His mother told him that she had heard from her husband twice before. She acknowledged that her husband was full of wrath, and blamed her because he was forgotten and put out of mind, for, though she was warned by him after his death to do but a little thing for him, yet she had neglected to do even that. But he excused her since she had deferred doing it because of the uncertainty of visions, and lest it should have been supposed that she had been deceived and beguiled. Finally he said to her: "Send to the Monk without tarrying, as I command thee, and tell him how often I have appeared to thee about the same matter; and also say, upon these tokens, that the last time he saw me I was in great pain, and that among other things that he heard from me, I told him

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how much the holy confessor Saint Nicholas had helped me."

The Goldsmith prayed me with great insistance that I should influence both his wife and son on his behalf, and command them to carry on the worship and service which he was wont to do in his life, and to follow his example in never omitting, for any excuse, the daily worship of Saint Nicholas. Daily, more and more, must she amend her living, and diligently show her devotion and service to his patron and advocate, Saint Nicholas.

This Goldsmith of whom I have spoken died about fifteen months ago, and in a short time was sped, by the merits of the holy confessor, Saint Nicholas, his patron, out of so much sorrow. I could scarcely have hoped to see anyone profit so much as he did in such a short time. Therefore it is expedient for all,

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while they live in this world, to serve devoutly the holy saints of God, through whom in great need they may gain the grace and mercy of Almighty God, as has been often shown and proved.

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Of the Third Place of Pains and Torments in Purgatory

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Now let us show what takes place in the remaining region of purgatory, namely, the third place that we beheld. It exceeds everything that can be conceived by human mind, of cruel and deadly tormenting. But I realize that no man can adequately describe the quantity of evil that is there, or tell adequately of the least of its pains. I felt more secure in visiting that place, knowing that my guide and leader was the holy Bishop and confessor, Saint Nicholas, whom I have ever specially worshipped and loved. The more devotedly I worshipped him, the more sure was I made of his fellowship and company, and the safer to see and behold the horrrible pains and torments, which, being now absent from them, I cannot recall without great horror and anguish.

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On leaving the second place of pains, we came to a great field, set, as it seemed, in a low ground, sequestered and separated from its surroundings, so that no one could enter it except those that were punished there. Upon the surface of the field hung a horrrible cloud, in which were mingled thick fumes of brimstone, steaming with a great stench, and with flames as black as pitch, which broke out on every side like hills, and so spread all about; and the hollows of the place were filled as full of reptiles as floors are wont to be strewn with rushes. They were above all conception horrible, wonderful, unshapely, with ghastly open mouths, and breathing out cursed fire at their noses. With unspeakable greed they tore the wretched company of folk that were there, already wasted and consumed with torture. Devils also ran over them all like madmen,

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and were remorselessly cruel to the poor wretches, punishing them with fiery instruments, singly, at every member of their bodies. Afterwards they gnawed them and tore their flesh utterly from the bone; and finally they cast them into the fire and made them as liquid as molten metal, and took them out again, blazing shapes.

I take God to record that this is little, or nothing, to what I am about to tell of the pains and torments of that place; for in a short time I beheld a hundred different pains and torments or more, and saw how the sufferers were consumed and wasted to nought and then restored again. There was neither end nor limit to the number of times that they were brought to nought by great pains and torments, and anon made whole again, whereby for their lost life they were made to suffer. The heat and burn-

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ing of the fire was so fervent and devouring, that whatever it burnt would be almost consumed and destroyed. The worms that were kept there were broken into small pieces and then were gathered together in great heaps and laid under the unhappy wretches; and the great stench from them which filled the place exceeded all the torments and pains before related.

One thing remains to be described, which they were compelled to suffer in that place, and which is more hateful, painful, and shameful than anything described above.

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Of an Unclean and Foul Vice and Sin

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All those who were thus punished and pained, had committed, while they lived in this world, that foul sin which cannot be named by Christians or by heathens. Certain great monsters, that is to say great beasts, unnaturally shapen, showed themselves in a fiery likeness—a horrible and ghastly sight—and often threw themselves upon them violently, and compelled them. Between the monsters' cursed embraces, they roared and yelled and cried out, and afterwards fell down together as if they were dead; but were taken up again and driven to new pains. Until now I had not understood the saying of the holy apostle Saint Paul, in his epistle, where he condemns such foul sins against nature. I could not have believed that now, in Christian times, such sins could be. Alas for sorrow, there I found a company as innumerable as

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they were wretched! I did not know many of the persons there, nor did I look at them closely, because the nature of their sin, and the great stench and torments, smote me with such horror and disgust. It was more grievous to me than anyone can believe, to be in that place even a moment, and to behold such things.

Nevertheless, I personally experienced no stench nor any of the other pains; I think if I had I could not have survived it. But I sufficiently perceived the intolerable enormity of it. The wretches that were there felt all these pains and others infinitely worse. Everyone of them cried, between their sorrowful lamentations and complaints, "Alas, alas, why did I sin so; why did I not do penance for my sins, and amend my living!" Their voice of weeping and sorrow was lifted up with such a great cry, that one would have expected it to be heard throughout the world.

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Of a Doctor of Law who Was One of these Sinners

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Though I refused as much as possible to see the things that were done in that place, I could not avoid recognising one clerk whom I once knew. This clerk was a doctor of law in his day, held in high esteem among other doctors of law. He instructed many students of the faculty in schools, and in that way became intimate with men of worth. He possessed large benefices and tithes of the church, and yet coveted more; wherefore, by the will of God, Who would have all men turn to repentance, he fell into a serious illness, by which he was vexed and diseased for about nine months. This was sent as a gentle visitation by Our Saviour, to dispose him, by the scourge of sickness and sorrow, to amend his sinful living. When he was in good health he committed deadly trespasses against God. But he

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was over careful of his bodily health, which he loved much and vainly presumed to regain, therefore he never confessed his sins for the health of his soul, and especially his foul sin of unclean living, which is the first deed of alms that a man should do. Neither had he any compassion on poor people, to give alms to them; and he did nothing for the Saints of God, as in meekly offering to Him his service for the redemption of his sins; and he paid no heed to give of his earthly goods as long as he lived. Then the heavenly Physician, Our Saviour, saw that he was no better for his sickness, which had been sent as a warning, and which He had given him for a spiritual medicine, and that he did not abstain from his wicked life, which was the cause of his affliction. Therefore as the evil deeds could not be purged and cleansed in his youth,

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Our Lord Jesus Christ mercifully put an end to them. Those whose hard and impenitent hearts earn the wrath of Our Saviour from day to day, their life in this world will be shortened, and taken away in the day of his wrath; and in the night of death no man can help himself. For as long as their life is granted to them, their sins and misdeeds increase and grow, to their perdition and destruction; therefore what could be more to their advantage than that their weapons should be taken away, and so prevent them from adding strokes to their own wounds.

I did not know that this clerk, whom I knew sometime ago in my childhood, was deceased, for he had removed from the place where I knew him. But I found him as I have related in such pains and torments; and I marvelled at it, for I expected him to be alive still, and an honest person.

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I asked him whether he hoped at any time to have the mercy of God. He answered, "Alas, alas, I know that on this side of doomsday I shall have no mercy; and whether I shall have any then, I am not certain. Ever since I was put here in these pains, they increase more and more." Then I said, "Why did you not confess your sins at the last, and do penance for them?" He replied, "Because I hoped to have recovered, and also through the deceit of my enemy, the devil, I was ashamed to confess such a horrible sin, lest I should be despised and dishonoured amongst those to whom I appeared illustrious and honest. I confessed my little sins to an honest and worshipful priest, whom you know well. And when he asked me if I had anything else to confess, I bade him go his way, and if any other thing came to my mind, I would send for him

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and tell him. Directly he was gone, and scarcely arrived at his church, I began to die. He was recalled, but when he came, he found me dead and gone.

"Of the thousand pains that I suffer daily, none are so grievous to me as the recollection of the impure life that I led in the world; and now I am actually compelled to indulge the same foul passion. Besides the horrible pains that I am in, I am confounded by shame, and made cursed and abominable in the sight of all men by the same sin. Alas, alas, who would ever have thought that the reverence and favour in which I was held among men, could be turned to such confusion and contempt as it is now?"

He said this with great weeping and crying. While I wondered at the wretchedness and pains of such a great man, I saw how he was

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punished in innumerable ways, and by these torments was brought to nought, and dissolved by strength and heat of fire, and made liquid as molten lead.

Then I asked Saint Nicholas, my leader, if this man's pains could be relieved by any means.

He answered, "When the day of doom is come, Christ's will shall be fulfilled; He only knows the hearts of all men, and He will do justly to every man."

Therefore I could know nothing for certain of this man's deliverance.

Those things which we have spoken of before, may well be considered, as the Scripture says, in this wise: It is not well with him that is busy in evil, neither with him that doth no alms.

Consider how greatly those are helped in the

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place of pains who gave alms in their lives, as Our Lord says in the gospel. This clerk was in his life wise and witty in his own eyes, and trusting in himself, cared little to give alms and do good to others for the sake of his sins, and this brought him to damnation.

Now meditate on what has been said of this clerk, and previously what was said of the goldsmith, and how it reveals and confirms the sentence of Scripture which says: Mighty men mightily shall suffer torments, and to a meek man is granted mercy.

That goldsmith, though he was a sinner, never presumed on his wit or any other virtue, but was meek and lowly in his own sight, and knew himself foolish and insecure, because of his sins. Therefore, as far as he could by alms and services he won the prayers and

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help of his great and mighty advocate and patron, Saint Nicholas, and in time of need he had help and mercy as he desired. This clerk, on the contrary, presumed on the wit and riches he possessed and continued in his wickedness; and because he thought himself exempt from the common labour of men in this world, he is now made a bitter and cruel example, and punished beyond others.

I saw his tongue hanging out of his head like a firebrand. He suffered this because he, a man mighty in words, often perverted the truth and took bribes. And he used not only to jangle idle words, but also not to restrain his words in wrath. Therefore it was no wonder that he was punished for such excesses and faults; for Our Lord speaks in the gospel of the rich man who for his light speaking and

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jangling at meals, was punished by a flame of fire in his tongue.

Some time after, that worshipful priest, to whom the clerk had confessed his small sins, came to me. I told him how the clerk, when he was confessed, bade him go his way for the present, and so died. When I told him this he wept bitterly, and took God to witness that it was very truth.

Out of the multitude of wretches in that place, I only recognised this clerk.

Soon after we had passed this third place, we came to a region where the souls who had been purified in purgatory, rested joyfully; in which place I knew many, and found them in great felicity and comfort. I will afterwards declare the joys of that place, if the Lord will give me grace, and the mirth and gladness of those who were there. But first let us return

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to the narration of those things which we have left, and to the pains and merits of some persons in particular, that I saw and found in the above-mentioned places of purgatory, as I promised before.

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Of Two Persons whom the Monk Saw, and Spoke with, in the First Place of Purgatory, and First with a Prior

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There was a prior, whom I knew well, who was father of a religious house, and had died this year. Many incidents of his life I must omit, for they were too long to tell. I recognised him in the first place of purgatory, suffering great torments and grievous pain; sometimes in fire, and again in stinking baths of brimstone and pitch mixed together; his whole appearance was most miserable and dreadful. As soon as he saw me, he called meekly and greeted me, and I spoke to him with heartfelt compassion. I enquired whether he suffered such pain for faults he committed in his youth, in neglecting the vows of his order which he took upon him in his childhood.

He said, "Nay; my terrible and bitter sufferings are not only for my own sins and excesses, though I offended in many ways, but

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also for the wickedness and misrule of the people that I had the charge and cure of in my life. I am bound to suffer such pains as are due for my own sins; but them I used to redeem and purify by frequent confession and penance, by earnest prayer, and in various other ways.

"Of those sins, what grieves me most is the carnal affection and love that I had for my friends, my father and mother, and others of my kindred, for some of whom I got benefices of the church when they were quite unworthy to have them; and to others I gave most indiscreetly, gifts from the property of the monastery of which I was prior. Now they scarcely remember me or do anything for me in my need. My love of the worship and favour of the people also haunts me. Alas, alas, for sorrow! if God does not take mercy on me, I shall suffer these pains without end. The covetous

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ambition to keep my position, and the fear of being deprived of it, so blinded me, that I loosened the bridle of correction over the wills of my subordinates, and allowed them to follow their desires and lusts, as though my eyes had been closed, fearing that if I corrected and restrained them from their folly, they would become my enemies and endeavour to turn me out of my prelacy.

"Further, any good religious men who had zeal and love for their vows, I did not help or favour in their efforts to preserve the purity of religion, but contrary to virtue, slandered and disparaged them, with others who had no love for them; and I encouraged those who were disposed to evil, and violated their holy profession and order. I did all this partly from negligence and partly to defend my prelacy.

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"To permit them to play games, chatter of trifles, joke, and do other folly, and to go in and out among secular folk in idleness, was unlawful for me, as it was for them. Some of them presumed, through this weak indulgence of mine, to participate in many cursed evils, for which I am punished without hope, although I did not approve of their wicked deeds. But I knew of them, and was so cowardly I pretended to be ignorant; wherefore many continued in their evil ways, going from bad to worse. Some went to their deaths thus, while I still lived, and they are now damned everlastingly. Some are yet living in worse and worse sins, and I shudder to think of the inextinguishable fire for them and for me.

"The first day after my death was easier than any day since, for all the sins they commit now, after my death, which were contracted

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through my negligence, increase my pains still more. Some who are dead and some still living have succumbed to that abominable sin that ought not to be named; and because I put them under no correction, I now dread nothing so much as the fear of being compelled to experience the foul stench which is suffered by those who fall into this abomination; for I know that this stench is more intolerable than any pain that sinners suffer. Whenever those whom I left alive offend damnably, devils run to me with great scorn and upbraiding, and increase my torments more and more."

He also told me what place, day, and time he passed out of this world, and what sins he had done. There were some of the brothers of the house of which he was prior, who were elevated by zeal of righteousness and fervour of religion, and laboured with diligence to the

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end that all worldliness should be cast aside, and that the purity and honour of their order might be preserved.

I knew this was truth, so enquired of the prior: "How then was it reported that many things were reformed and improved while you were still prior, if there is so much evil there yet?"

He replied: "It is true, as you say, that much was corrected, but I reap no fruit from the amendment because I hindered their endeavours, lest I too should come under their judgment; and I was more ashamed to bear public censure, than abashed at the knowledge in secret of the shameful dishonour of the order. It had become so froward and obstinate that I thought it utterly incorrigible, and but for the miraculous power of God's help, all reform must have failed. Alas, why did I ever

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listen to such evil counsel? Alas that I ever favoured and exalted the wicked, and offended the majesty of God by letting them have their own way!

"There are four persons," he said,—and told me their names—"to whom I should like to impart, that unless they do adequate penance to God for their cursed deeds and counsels, by which they themselves are damned, and which others have followed, they will surely bear the everlasting torments of hell. And if they did penance till doomsday, they should think it but little satisfaction and expiation for the great and cursed pains they have brought upon me. The wickedness of these four has infected and obstructed almost all the house, and formerly, rather than displease them, I inclined to their wills.

"There are very few of all the convent that

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have said the masses and psalms and other intercessions and prayers for me, which it is their duty to do according to our religion. Many for whom I am now suffering sorely have done none of these things for me, and therefore, with sorrow and dread on every side, I bear these present torments."

These things I heard from this prior, as I have related them.

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Of an Anchoress that he Saw and Knew in the Same Place

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I also knew a certain anchoress, who was of good and honest conversation, and whom I greatly loved. I saw her there, as she had lately come from the world. She was earnest and steadfast in appearance and fair to behold. She was a little wearied with the laborious path that she had travelled; and the fire that enveloped others, here and there, sometimes touched and burnt her. But she took little heed, but hasted her speedily on the journey to paradise.

I take God to witness that I thought this was some ghost, or a dream, for I did not believe she was dead. I said to myself: The virtuous life of this anchoress and servant of Christ is shown to me by imagination, for she is yet alive in her body, so cannot be here. The third day

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after I had come to myself again, a neighbour of hers was here, and I prayed him to greet her kindly from me, and that she would vouchsafe to pray for me. He said: "Pray ye also for her, my good friend, for she is deceased and passed to God." I was greatly astonished at his words; and then I believed it was true that I had seen her in the first place of purgatory.

Furthermore, the general condition of all folk that die was revealed to me, and I perceived that all people ordained to rest and bliss before the day of doom, had their pains lessened little by little from the first hour of their death. But if they had left evil examples to others that lived, and caused them to sin, and meanwhile had rendered no satisfaction to God whereby their sinful examples might have been forgiven them before their death; or if they had sinned

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so grievously that they deserved everlasting damnation; they began to go from bitter pains to worse, and every new day was more grievous to them than the last.

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Of a Certain Bishop That Was There

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I saw a bishop there in pains, who was born in England, but had his bishopric beyond the sea. He died this year about the feast of Saint Michael, the archangel. At the time I knew clearly the exact day of his passing, but now it is fallen out of my mind, which was then occupied with many things that I saw. Innumerable things occurred there, which I could not note carefully, and indeed I cannot remember all that I noted. The same man that had told me of the death of the anchoress, told me also of the passing of this bishop, but he did not know the day. Another young man, who was cousin of and connected with the bishop, and also in his service while he lived, came home again to England, and brought certain word that the bishop was dead.

I saw this bishop burning continually in

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flames of fire,—principally because of the vicious living of his youth. He was tormented in innumerable ways; but because of one most curious thing about him, I wished specially to remember to speak of him.

While he was busily burning in the fire, he was still clad in an ample plain garment which was not hurt by the fire, but seemed to be gilded, and to be made more seemly and fairer than it was before. Then Saint Nicholas declared to me the reason of this mystery, saying: "He gained this privilege when he lived, by good deeds which he used to do. And it was this: he always had compassion on poor people that were naked, and relieved them liberally in their distress; therefore his clothing shall never lack fairness, till he have fulfilled his penance and received of God the stole of everlasting joy and bliss."

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Of a Certain Woman that was a Poor Man's Wife

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A woman who was a poor man's wife, died this last year with her husband, who was respected, and in many ways well disposed. She was once a familiar and beloved friend of mine, so that I gladly beheld her in light pains compared with others, and swiftly going forth to the great reward and worship of heavenly joys. Her great fault had been a habit of impatiently scolding and upbraiding any who wronged her, and she had allowed sourness and rancour to linger in her heart against them, and therefore she had suffered these pains. She had hated this vice, but could not conquer it because of her frailty; but she had often wept that she could not overcome it, wherefore, it was the sooner forgiven her. Furthermore, she had been devout in her prayers, and given to alms-deeds and hospitality, even more than she

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could well afford. Before her death she was proved and cleansed by a long sickness, as gold is proved in a furnace, during which time she almost cast from her the weight and stubbornness of her sins.

It is seldom in these days, when pure simplicity and innocence is rarely found, even in the church of God, that anyone in this life returns to and dwells in that state of equity and purity taught by the gospel, which, till man fulfills, he cannot dwell in heavenly places, nor rest in the mount and hills of paradise in joy and bliss. Therefore, whatever sin and uncleanness cling to the souls that pass out of this world, must be purged in another world; and so by their repentance the path to a joyful resting shall be shown to such as are purified and cleansed. Thus shall the entrance to heaven and everlasting bliss be largely opened

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to those souls, for the perfect desire they have to see God.

This must be understood to be spoken only of those whose sins are light, or whose greater misdeeds, by confession and satisfaction done for them, God grants to be changed and counted among venial sins. As for sins that are deadly, or are not made light and venial in this world by confession and penance, without doubt the sinner shall be judged in the world to come according to the state in which he passes out of this world.

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What Pains Religious Men Suffer for Certain Faults

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I saw all kinds of religious folk, both men and women, suffering certain pains, as well for little offences as for great sins; and as it were particular pains for particular sins. And it seemed to me the least pains they suffered were very severe,—even for such little offences as immoderate laughing, idle words, allowing their minds to wander over-much in vain thoughts; or for lightly breaking the rules and forms of their religion, such as too nice attention to gesture, or multiplying signs too much; also for idly wandering out of their cloisters and cells, and many such things. I saw some weeping miserably and rolling burning coals about in their mouths for eating herbs and fruits out of due time, not for medicine or need, but for greed and appetite. They were beaten for immoderate laughing, smitten in the face for idle

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speech, and for vain thoughts they suffered grievous and varied troubles by the way. Those that transgressed by dissolute gesture and behaviour were bound with sharp fiery bands; and for superfluity of signs, and playing idle wanton games together, some had their fingers flayed, and some bruised by knocks. Those that were capricious, wandering here and there, were cast and thrown about from one place to another, by which their limbs were badly maimed. Ribald or blasphemous words against the worth of religion were punished almost as severely as deadly sins. Whoever broke any vows made to God or to His saints suffered inestimable torments, especially if they were made in time of dread and peril for help and deliverance, and then forgotten.

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Of a Certain Knight Who Made a Vow

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Among those who broke their vows, I saw a young knight that I once knew, burning in the midst of fire. I enquired why he was so doomed to such great pains, and he told me as follows:

"My life," he said, "was profitless and vain, and also vicious. I was insolent, arrogant, proud, and dissolute. But I am now being punished especially because I cast away the Cross which I had vowed to take to the Holy Land; but I did not take the vow for devotion, but to gain vain-glory in the eyes of the lord I served. I now labour every night as far as possible to reach the end of that pilgrimage; but what with weakness, contrariness of the weather, and the difficulties of the way, I am so hindered that I can accomplish but a short day's journey. When the morning begins wicked

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spirits fly to me, and cruelly drag me back to the place of my pains, where all day I am cruelly burned with fire, though with slightly less suffering daily. When night comes I am again restored to the place where I last left my journey, and so go forth on my pilgrimage. All that vowed to go to the Holy Land, and then cast their Cross from them and went not, are compelled to do their pilgrimage in the same manner. If by the grace of God they repent, as I did at last for breaking my vow, then this, that was a deadly sin, may be changed to a venial sin; otherwise all that break that vow are put to eternal damnation."

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Of Another Knight

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Another knight who died and passed to God ten years ago, I recognised there. When I saw him, he had overcome all the great pains he had suffered at first, and therefore I say he did well, for by that penance he had gone far towards the joys of paradise. He bore on his wrist a little bird like a sparrow-hawk. In his life he gave gladly and liberally to all poor people who came to him, and was more hospitable than any of his neighbours. His wife died almost thirty winters before him, and after her death he lived continently and chaste as a widower, benevolent and ready to help all men. I wondered much why one who was so honest and upright had not yet received full rest and joy.

He said that it was no marvel, for when he lived he offended in many ways, especially because in his youth he was brought up luxuri-

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ously, and through companionship was drawn into many follies for which he could not fully atone in his worldly surroundings, where he must conform to the manners and customs of those amongst whom he dwelt. He complained that the hawk which he now bore on his fist tore his hand painfully with her bill and sharp claws. He suffered this, he said, because in hawking, which he pursued all his life, he greatly delighted to see the hawks when they flew and captured other birds. He did not give it up in his old age, for he did not realise that it was a sin, and therefore had no compunction.

I noted many other things in this first place of purgatory, both about those that I knew and about other men and women of all professions and degrees, who were all punished with innumerable pains, sharp and bitter, as I have just described above in general; and these few examples are sufficient at present.

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Of the Persons that he Saw in the Same Place of Purgatory

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I will now describe some of those things that I saw in the second place of purgatory. In this second place I recognised many more of my acquaintances than I did in any other place. They were weeping and sorrowing for the sins by which they had broken Our Lord's commandments, and whereby they had been alienated and removed far from His familiar knowledge.

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Of Three Bishops that he Found There

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I saw three bishops that I once knew well, straightly bound with fiery chains, often turning and wallowing miserably, now in great fire, now in sharp storms of hail and snow and whirlwinds, and afterwards in a foul stinking pond of black water. They were punished diversely, not far from each other. One of them was more bitterly tormented than the others, because in his life he used to sit among secular judges in the courts to hear the pleading, in which he took great pleasure; and often he was a violent oppressor to many who pleaded their cause righteously and in good conscience. Therefore he now complained with an open mouth that his tongue was constantly burning in flames of fire. First he was burnt in fire, and again wet and frozen stiff in snow and frost, now in the stinking pond, and then foully covered

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with filth and mire, his tongue burning all the while.

Another of them recklessly broke his chastity, which especially in a bishop was disgraceful and abominable; therefore he was drowned frequently in the foul stinking pond, that lies between the great heat and cold, as has been said. Before his death he left the honour and dignity of his bishopric, and took the meek habit of a monk, which helped him greatly among other deeds of satisfaction. Great good and profit come to all who do likewise; for they are specially helped by the prayers of the holy saints that once bore the same habit, and who have been known to rise up again in the order in which they lived when on earth, or in which at their latter end, in full devotion, they forsook this world.

The third of these bishops delighted in

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worldly worship and vain-glory. For this sin he was wafted up on high in flames of fire; and because by this sin he fell from the love of God to the chill of worldly sloth, he was let down, burning, to the grievous cold that was on the other side of the fire.

These three were in torment for the neglect of the souls they had charge of; for the great solicitude they had for riches, and for despising poor people; for flattering princes, and for excessive favour towards their kinsfolks; and as I may shortly sum up in a few words: Each one of them sought after those things that were for himself, and not those things that belong to Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The common failing of these and many other prelates that I saw, was the neglect of their office, delight in wordly homage, and abuse of their charge. They sorrowed deeply

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because they had abused their power, granted them by God, to the great injury of themselves and the perdition of their dependents; and therefore the pains of all such prelates were daily increased, as I have shown by the account of the prior; and in spite of the masses and alms which their friends in the world offered for them, and other things by which their pains might be lessened, yet daily their anguish increased through the sinful living of those they had favoured and encouraged in their vices, by not correcting them, as was the duty of their office. All such greatly doubted of their salvation, and were almost in despair. Nothing grieved them more than the uncertainty of their deliverance; and nothing alleviated their sorrows and sufferings more than a lively hope and trust that by Our Lord's mercy they would be delivered. They that

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were assured of a limit to their retribution and were not consigned to the certainty of damnation, enjoyed great solace and comfort.

As far as I can remember, of all the grievous diseases and tortures of the souls that were there, the anguish of despair was the worst.

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Of an Archbishop of Canterbury

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I saw besides these, a certain person, once of great name and fame, who having been brought up in the religious life of the monkhood, and living devoutly in bodily penance and holy meditations, and many other excellent virtues, was at last promoted to be Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of England. But alas for sorrow, the greater he grew in the sight of the people, the more he fell and decreased in the sight of God, who beheld him inwardly; indeed his immortal life would have been lost if he had not been saved by God's mercy, and but for the merits of his previous good living, when, as a monk, he had pleased our Lord by his good endeavour and acceptable labour. When he became Archbishop of Canterbury, he was full of worldly wisdom and paid little heed to his cure and to the spiritual health

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of his people. He unwisely promoted unworthy persons to benefices in the church, and was too cowardly to administer laws that displeased the king, by whose favour, it seemed, he had come to that dignity. He contrived under pretence of zeal to harass any who had opposed his promotion to the archbishopric. In these and other things he had greatly offended.

And he was the more to blame in that he suppressed and concealed the authority of religion and wisdom, which had gained him his position, and ought to have been used to great advantage. Whoever do thus, are subjected to great penalties; for they become a slander to the church of God, if they will not pluck up and destroy the rooted vices of wicked living which are sown in the hearts and minds of the people of God; and if they do not by virtue of their office edify and plant in their

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people the nobility of good and honest living, they are then no better than others that lack both holiness and intelligence.

But Our Lord seeks teachers for the people from among such as have no experience in worldly things, as well as from those who have wit and learning,—even though afterwards they may use it unprofitably, and earn thereby the greater pains and torments.

Bishops now-a-days are much to blame for the wicked lives of priests and clerks, because they do not correct this terrible sin of levity, which is a great wrong to the heavenly sacraments of holy church. For all the help in life of Christian people is contained in those blessed sacraments, and yet the priests who conduct them are not ashamed to defile them by being themselves corrupt and depraved.

I saw many things of the negligence of deans,

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archdeacons, and other officers, which I shall not relate; and how by their dishonesty in taking gifts and bribes, almost all Christendom is overcome and subverted. This is clearly shown by the deeds and mode of life of many now living.

The corruption and laxity of such personages, who should have special zeal and love towards the people of God, requires and demands eternal damnation, equally of the clergy as of the laity—but most of all of themselves and their superiors.

For these and many such things, the aforesaid archbishop suffered great torments, with complaints and groans. He was helped by the glorious martyr and Archbishop of England, Saint Thomas of Canterbury, whom he had prevailed upon to be his special patron and helper, because when he made a pilgrimage to

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the Holy Land, he had founded a hospital for pilgrims there, and dedicated it to Saint Thomas, to the great succour and comfort of Christian Pilgrims. I first heard of this deed when I was in purgatory, and saw the Archbishop in suffering; but yesterday I enquired if it were true, and a certain religious man told me how it was founded and begun. His pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where he had founded this hospital, had greatly profited him.

Many priests, who by the grace of God had left their vicious habits, in true contrition of heart and honest confession of mouth while they lived, were still tormented by innumerable pains because they had not done sufficient penance. Then I thought to myself how few priests were found there of the great number that were in the world, and deserved pains after their death for breaking their chastity. To this it was

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answered: Few are here, for scarcely any of them were really penitent and contrite while they lived, and therefore no doubt the great multitude of them are utterly damned."

In all this vision I saw none that had entirely lost hope of salvation, and were in certainty of eternal damnation. Some who were in grievous suffering had no knowledge when they should be saved, which was most painful to them; and some knew for certain of their deliverance, and that was a great solace to them, as I said before.

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Of Different Kinds of Sinful People and of Their Pains

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It were too long to rehearse by name all the people I saw and knew, of all conditions, degrees, and orders; or to describe separately the pains and torments of every single crime, as it was shown to me, for it would be tedious and wearisome to the reader. For every sin mentioned in holy scripture, there is ordained a particular penalty for such as commit it. I shall pass over the murderers, adulterers, fornicators, liars and forswearers, gluttons, traitors, covetous folk, proud and envious people, slanderers, haters, and a thousand more who are doomed to special pains and tribulations. Who could possibly tell of all the separate trangressions, when even good and religious men suffered among the sinful, only because they took pleasure in the shapeliness of their hands, and their long fingers! Travellers who were

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slain by thieves in their journey were treated with great leniency. I must not leave out thieves, who in this world had been hung for their sins. Those who confessed to a priest or publicly acknowledged their guilt in true contrition of heart, had most help to overcome their penalties, and if they took their death patiently, forgiving their enemies and all wrongs and trespasses done to them, as well as their death, in remission of their sins, they were treated with wonderful tolerance and mercy. There were others also who had been punished and hung for theft and other misdeeds, but who would not frankly confess their sins before their death, hoping by the fraud and deceit of their enemy, the devil, to escape harmless, by denying and excusing their crimes, although they had intended to confess to a priest afterwards, and to do condign penance, and to utterly abandon their

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sinful lives if they had the time granted them; but not having it, at their last moments they had besought God and His Holy Saints for mercy and help—all such were severely tormented for their sins; but even these had not lost hope of mercy and forgiveness. They were gyved in fiery fetters and hung in the midst of fire on gibbets, where cruel tormentors and fiends beat them with scourges and forks, and upbraided them with their sins and crimes, with great scorn and mockery.

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Of Poisoners and Usurers that he Saw There

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Poisoners, and women who had deserted their babies, or had slain them, or by some cursed device had caused them to be born before their time, were torn and bruised by being beaten with nails. They were compelled to drink metals, such as brass and lead molten by fire and mixed with horrible stinking things which burnt their inward bowels and went right through them, and then it was brought to them to drink again. Great monsters and creeping beasts with horrible ghastly arms clasped the women, and stuck their claws deep in their necks and sides, and hung at their breasts, with venomous mouths, and gnawed them with their cursed teeth.

Usurers, also I saw, who were drowned in great heaps or hills of burning money, sorrowfully lamenting that they had not quenched the evil flame and sin of covetousness when they lived in this world.

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Of Fugitives from Religious Orders

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Religious persons who were fugitives, that is to say, who fled from the order in which they had bound themselves to the service of God, and returned to the world and to worldly living,—as a dog turns again to his vomit,—were smitten with such terrible pains that I cannot describe their agony. Even bitter repentance and confession at last scarcely saved such people from everlasting damnation; for their apostasy was persistently and pitilessly punished.

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Of a Certain King of England

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But what shall I say of a prince, once King of England, who in his life was very mighty amongst all the princes of this world?

He was pressed and tortured on every side; one might say of him as Saint John the Evangelist said in his apocalypse: For as much as they did exalt and magnify themselves, and lived in unlawful lusts and delights, so shall they be given to torment and heaviness. None can imagine with what tortures his body and limbs were racked. He sat upon a horse which blew from his nose a flame as black as pitch, mixed with a smoke and stench of hell, to the intolerable anguish of him that sat above it. He was completely armed at all points as he would have gone to war. The armour was agony to him, for it was like bright, burning iron when it is beaten with hammers and sends

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out fiery sparks, by which he was burnt inside and out, and oppressed with its weight. I have not mentioned his helmet, shield, and habergeon, and leg harness, for the heat and weight of them gave him more suffering than one can say. He would have given all the world to have been delivered from one spur with which he was compelled to urge his horse to trot, when it often fell headlong. The saddle that he sat on was staked through on both sides with fiery brooches and nails, a ghastly sight for any man to behold! He was pierced through by the sharpness of these brooches and nails; and thus cruelly was he punished for the unprincipled shedding of man's blood, and for the foul vice of adultery; two sins he had often committed.

Cruel tormentors and wicked fiends upbraided him because he wanted to be revenged on men that slew his game, such as hart and hind,

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buck and doe, which by law of possession every man should be free to kill. For this, he even put some to death, and cruelly maimed others; and for all these he did but little penance as long as he lived.

He complained that neither of his sons nor his friends to whom he had bequeathed many temporal goods, did anything for his relief after his death. "Nothing," said he, "my sons and my friends have done for me in these pains. Alas! see how all my labour is lost, for it was useless to have made my heirs rich and mighty. Alas, for the deceit and false flattery of people! What have they done for wretched me? It was for them I gathered so much treasure and riches, and gave so many rents and possessions; for them I so greatly offended God while I lived; and now that I am dead none of them do anything for me."

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I saw him slightly relieved and eased of his pains by the prayers of religious men, to whom in his life he was very benevolent sometimes; and this I understood was his only hope of being saved. Besides all these things he sorrowed and grieved because he oppressed the people unduly with taxes.

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Of a Bishop who Was There in Torment, and Yet God Showed Miracles by him after his Death

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I remember how four years ago, a certain bishop was chosen to be archbishop, but he was suddenly prevented from taking his appointment by death. He was well disposed and religious, pure and devout in heart, and clean of body; and by wearing a sharp hair shirt, and other penance, he had tamed his own flesh.

He tried in his manner and appearance to conform to those of the laity, and to shun any suggestion of vain glory, which has ever proved an enemy to virtue. Outwardly he always expressed by his words and countenance, gladness and cheerfulness, though within he was contrite in heart and affection.

This bishop used also, it is said, to do penance for his daily faults, when he had offended, by chastisement and weeping, and also for other

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sins that he had done in his youth. In his bishopric he had grievously transgressed through negligence, as the other bishops did of whom I have made mention. I have heard it declared of this bishop by many that miracles were done by him after his death to sick and feeble people. And I suppose it is true that Our Lord did honour His servant with such benefits, as an example to others. The strict and clean life pleased Our Lord, who beholds only men's hearts. And though I found him still in pains, the great reward and recompense of the everlasting bliss of heaven was awaiting him, without doubt.

He that does not believe that miracles are done by those in purgatory, let him read the fourth book of the dialogue of Saint Gregory, and there he will see more fully an example of such a miracle, done at Rome, by a holy man called Pascasius, a deacon.

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Of a Certain Abbot

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An abbot, who was a very religious and sober man, died ten years ago. He bequeathed to one of his brethren much money to give to the poor for the help of his soul. This monk wisely and devoutly fulfilled the abbot's will, and gave all the money to the poor and needy. Where he knew of any that were cold and hungry, or afflicted with sickness, or those who were borne of honest folk, of good character, but who had fallen to such poverty that they had not enough to live on and were ashamed to beg, to such he would open his hand and relieve them with meat and drink and shoes and clothes. Also to anchoresses and widows, to old folk and poor scholars, he gave much, commanding them all to pray for the soul of him for whom the money was given; and they did so willingly.

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When this true and faithful monk had given to the poor all that was left him, he fell into an illness by which he was well proved and tried for a long time, and died four years ago, making a blessed end. Both the abbot and the monk I found there in purgatory.

The abbot was still in suffering, chiefly for excessive love to his kinsfolk, to whom he gave too much from his monastery, and spent more on them than he ought to have done. That vice, carnal love of kindred, has been a snare to many people professing religion, and also to dispensers of the goods of holy church, as bishops and others, who distribute them probably in other uses than they should.

And just as those who waste the goods of holy church, by which they were enriched with luxurious clothing and rich food and pomps of the world, will have to give account of it,

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so also those who stint in the use for holy church of whatever they possess, even though it be not spent in vanity, will have to answer for it. They should give first generously to the poor of their parishes, and afterwards, with discretion, help their fathers and mothers as they need, but not extravagantly, and thus without offense, by charity, deserve reward of God.

It was in purgatory that I first knew of this rule, framed for bishops and abbots and vicars of the church; and it cannot be broken without fear of great vengeance. Until I saw it thus ordained, I had not thought of it in this light; though I had known before that the manners and characters of such prelates were far removed from this. All who fulfil this law, as right and reason require, shall be rewarded by God as if they had given such goods from their own private possessions. Therefore this abbot,

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even though still grieved and tormented as mentioned above, hastened towards the rest of paradise. And when he saw the monk, his brother, who in a certain part near by was nevertheless removed from the sufferings and sorrows and very lightly pained in comparison, he bowed often to him and thanked him with both hands, for the great charity he had shown in the distribution of the money that had been delivered to him. The monk appeared to the abbot who beheld him very cheerful and gracious of mien. His clothing was white, very fair and seemly, though sprinkled with a few spots.

I marvelled at this, and Saint Nicholas, who held me by the hand, told me as follows: "Know thou that this monk served and pleased God well in his life with great singleness of heart and chastity of body, and he resisted and prevented evil which would have been done

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in the place he was in. He was fervent and zealous for the right, and hated evil, patiently suffering many reproofs in defence and for the good of his religion, and specially from those who wore the habit of religion to the intent that they might destroy the virtuous life and intercourse of religion, busily seeking to minister to the lusts of the world and of the flesh in the monasteries, instead of the needs of their spiritual life. And alas for sorrow! through such persons the worship and high honour previously accorded to holy church is almost brought to naught, while the multitude of carnal and worldy men increases above measure. The few spiritual men left, choose rather to shut their eyes to the evil, than by resisting it to stir up against themselves the violent wrath and vexation of such evilly disposed persons; and even then they are not safe from their spying

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and fraudulent practices. And as Ishmael, who was born of the flesh, pursued Isaac who was born of the spirit,—that is to say by a spiritual promise of Almighty God,—likewise so it is now. Carnal folk persecute spiritual people, because they cannot pervert them to their frowardness.

"It is sad to see how many begin their lives spiritually, but in process of time, are overcome by their weakness, or are deceived by folly and fall from their purpose and begin to be influenced by the corruption of the world, and enticed by the example and counsel of wicked people. The present depravity of the religious life, which before, in the time of the fathers, shone and flowered nobly, though the prelates of these days are aware of it, it is so despised and ignored by them that they do not heed its significance. But they give themselves to the lusts

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and pleasures of the world, instead of following Christ's poverty, and diligently minding their duty and caring for the people of God committed to them. They do not feed but destroy the people of God, and when the laity have turned them from righteousness, the priests flee from them, not showing themselves fathers and pastors, but wolves and thieves. The promotion of such persons by the king or bishops and other great men, is an evil to the people; for they are not rectors and fathers, but perverters and destroyers of souls, who think that whatever they do is lawful.

"And therefore, by the righteous judgment of God, realms are troubled, churches confounded, and states utterly subverted. And they that do thus demean the world, instead of acting as meek and devout intercessors to God, both for the living and for the dead, by whose well-doing

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and prayers, especially, the welfare of all Christendom might be preserved and increased, and all evil put away from the people of God, are accursed of Him."

And while Saint Nicholas thus complained of such things, and also recalled others that were a great commendation and honour to persons who in their time had manfully stood firm in such perils, and strengthened others to do the same, I saw on every side of me many I had known before, held in grievous torments and pains. I took special notice of those whom I had known a little while ago and loved right well.

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Of an Abbess Also

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Amongst such was a worshipful Abbess, who blessedly passed away this year from our world towards the everlasting life and joys of heaven. She told me much, both of the state that she had passed through and that she was now in. She requested me to tell many things to her own natural sisters, who were under the title of virginity among other holy virgins in the same monastery of which she had been abbess. She told me certain tokens by which to distinguish them, and said the news would be gracious and pleasant to them; but she bade me tell it only to those she commanded me. She said she had received much relief and help in her pains by the devout prayers and psalms of her sisters, the servants of God, to whom she had been a spiritual mother. She commanded me to thank them for the many good deeds

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they had done for her, and for the intercessions, masses, and other holy prayers that they had obtained for her from religious persons when they could. "Moreover," she said, "they have ordered masses and other devout prayers to be offered for me to Our Lord daily, without ceasing. Therefore let them know that without doubt they shall have great rewards, and I have escaped many sharp pains. If they persevere as they have begun, I hope to escape the remainder of my sufferings."

She told me also that it had helped her greatly that before she was made abbess she had shown great compassion in all meekness to some of her sisters who were suffering sorely in sickness or temptation, and had done all kinds of service in the monastery, which was considered menial and degrading.

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Of Two Young Nuns Who Were Lepers

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"There were two young virgins," continued the abbess, "who were infected with the great plague of leprosy, to such an extent that in many places the flesh had wasted right down to the bone, and the skin above was horribly blistered with sores. All the sisters of our monastery almost loathed to see or visit them, or to touch them; but to me it seemed sweet to take them in my lap or hold them in my arms, and to wash them in baths and wipe their sores with my sleeves. They suffered that plague of leprosy patiently and gladly, and thanked God for the chastisement and disease, and were as delighted with it as if they had received gracious gifts and adornments from Him. A little while ago they were pained in this world by a long martyrdom; now they blessedly follow the Heavenly Lamb, their Spouse, Jesus

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Christ, without any spot, wheresoever He goes. For the pity and charity I felt and showed them in their affliction, I have had swift help and relief through all my sufferings."

Many other things the abbess told me, amongst which she confessed that for one omission she suffered sorely, and that was because she had neglected a young child, a scholar, who was destitute of all friends, and was committed to her by a bishop, to be brought up; through her the child had lived long in great discomfort and unhappiness.

I saw and knew also some of the sisters who had been nuns in her monastery, suffering but light pains in that place of purgatory.

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Of a Knight Who Committed Simony

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There was a knight who was patron of a church who sold a parsonage for eighteen pounds to a certain priest. Afterwards he repented of the deed, and to make satisfaction for so great a sin, he took the cross to go to the Holy Land and visit Our Lord's sepulchre, to ask God's forgiveness and mercy there for his offence. The heathen then occupied the Holy Land and had driven all Christian people out. So the Christians, from all parts of the world, gathered together to fight against them and drive them away; and this knight joined the company. But he was overtaken by sickness and ended his life on that journey. I found him there in many pains. He told me that for this sin of simony he had suffered grievously. "And," he said, "if I had not been forewarned by the mercy of God, to repent before my death for that sin, I could not have escaped eternal damnation. The labour of the pilgrimage that I took for God towards the Holy

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Land, greatly lightened those penalties which were due for my sin. Also God allowed me to send to my wife, by a faithful priest who was warned by me in a dream, to tell her to order five tricennial masses, with the offices of *placebo* and *dirige* to be said for me, as the church ordained, for the dead; and they were to be said by priests that led an honest, pure life,—some of whom I mentioned by name."

She saw that these masses were duly done for him, and rewarded those who did them accordingly, by which he said his pains were greatly abated.

"For some time, soon after my death," he said, "I was compelled to devour, hot and burning, the pence that I had taken from the priest, and now by the mercy of God I am delivered from that terrible torment, principally by the intercession for me. I am still forced to suffer from bitter cold because when I lived I had no compassion on the poor and needy, who

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were ill-clad and cold. And even when I gave them food and drink, I would, in the hardness of my heart, be careful not to spend any money on them."

Then I said to him, "If masses were done again for you would you not receive perfect rest?"

He replied, "Yes, if seven tricenaries, with the offices belonging to them, that is *placebo* and *dirige*, were done for me, I think that I should then be delivered from pain to everlasting rest."

Mark well, that I know now without doubt, that this knight appeared, as he said, after his death in a vision to the priest, and appointed five monks of pure life, chosen by name, to say these masses and other services. The names of the priests and their dwellings, which he exactly described, were utterly unknown to the Knight in his life, and also to the clerk to whom he appeared, and to his wife.

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Of a Certain Young Monk who at One Time was Sexton of a Church

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A certain young man, a monk whom I once knew, lived religiously in many ways, and was sexton of the church where he lived. In this church there were three or four images of our blessed lady, Saint Mary, having in her lap the image of Our Saviour Jesu Christ as a little babe. They were set at every altar, well painted and fairly ornamented with gold and various colours, which stirred the people that beheld them to great devotion. Before every image hung a lamp, which after the custom of that church was lighted at every principal feast throughout the year, both by day and night, lasting from the first evensong to the second. Similar lamps lighted the rest of the church, all about.

It happened one time in the sexton's days, that oil was very scarce in that district; no

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one had any oil to sell, and it was seldom that any stranger came to trade at that season. The sexton, not knowing where he could get oil for necessary purposes, took the oil from Saint Mary's lamps, in the meantime, as he thought he might lawfully do,—although he still had a small supply, but he feared it would not suffice until he could replenish it. So, on Ascension day, and Whitsunday, he put no light in St Mary's lamps, on which feasts especially they were accustomed to burn. But he did not go unpunished. The third day of Whitsun week, when he was apparently well and sound, he was suddenly smitten with a sharp siezure, and was so ill that he went out of his mind, and on Tuesday of the next week he died. On the Saturday before his death, when he was almost at his last end, he saw in a vision the Queen of Heaven, our blessed lady Saint Mary, standing

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on a step of a winding stair that was near one of the images of our blessed lady in the church. And when he saw her he cried to her, remembering his sickness and peril, saying: "Oh, holy and blessed Mary, have mercy on me!" She answered him sharply, both in word and look, saying: "Thou hast taken from me the worship of my light on earth, and I shall take from thee the light of this present life."

When he heard this threat he was abashed, —and no marvel; he cast himself down at her feet with weeping and sorrowing, asking forgiveness of his trespass, and promising amendment. Then our blessed lady, whose threatening is tempered with mercy, looked upon him more gently and beckoned with her hand, showing him the step that she stood upon, and said: "Sit down here." He began, as he thought, to sit down in fear at her feet, when suddenly she vanished away.

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When he came to himself, he called his brethren and told them of this vision, and prayed them earnestly that the next day and night the lamps should be lighted, and burn as they were wont. He also made a vow that if he might have his health again, he would continually keep up and increase the number of the lamps, to the worship and honour of the glorious virgin and mother of God, our blessed Saint Mary. But he could not thereby recall the sentence that she had passed upon him. He died after Trinity Sunday, having rendered some satisfaction for his offence by having the lamps relighted.

He was still in pain and torments because he had offended often in his religion and in saying divine service; also he had been light in behaviour, and indiscreet in eating, drinking, laughing, speaking, joking, and many other ways.

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Of a Certain Priest who Lived a Holy Life

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Again I saw a priest that had passed out of this world in his youth, who by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost surpassed almost all his comrades in ability. He was only put to light suffering, and was going forth gladly in the testimony of a good conscience, towards the joy and rest of paradise. He was of good character and studied well at school; pure and chaste, benevolent and charitable, with other qualifications by which he pleased Our Lord. He had specially won the love of the most gracious virgin, the mother of God, our blessed lady Saint Mary, whom he served devoutly in his life, and often watched before her altar with long prayers and meek spirit and humble heart; for love of her he gave much to poor people, and without doubt this same blessed lady remained by him in heaven and gave him everlasting joy as a great reward.

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In the hour of his passing he had received much strength, and by her continued solace and succour, he was mercifully comforted in his pains. When he was shown to me he was only disturbed by both the intemperate cold and heat of the air. I enquired if he had suffered any other pains before; and I heard that he had to bear at one time painful thirst, and that was because when he had abundance of temporal goods he was harder to the poor than he should have been, although he had great compassion on them and did much to relieve them. But then he grew weary of them, and more particularly when he became richer; in fact before, when he was poor, and had not much to give, he was more liberal than when his wealth had increased.

Those who have received benefits and riches from the church should remember with fear

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and trembling, how strictly they must give an account of their distribution; as Our Lord Jesus says in the Gospel: To whom much is committed of him much shall be asked.

Now we have written down in the above words many things that we found and saw in the places of pains, and so let us here end our narration of them. Afterwards, as God will give us grace, we will attempt to tell and describe some things that we saw of the comfort and gladness of the blessed souls who rested joyfully in the merry and jocund place of paradise.

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Of Paradise and of the Multitude of People That I Saw and Found There

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Now I will tell you as I can and may of the solace and comfort of the blessed souls that had escaped from their pains and were at rest, and of their everlasting joys. When we had passed the three places of pains, and had beheld the various and great torments of sinners, we went further. And as we went, there began to appear little by little, more and more, a fair light about us, and a very pleasant sweet savour broke out. Then we came to a field which was full of all kinds of fair and sweet flowers that gave us an incredible and inestimable comfort of joy and pleasure. In this field we saw and found infinite thousands of souls, jocund and merry, enjoying a sweet rest after their penance and purgation. Those that we found first, in the beginning of the field, wore white clothing, but it was not very bright

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and shining. However, they had no spot of blackness on it, only as I say, it was not very bright shining white.. Among these I recognized many I had known well when they lived in this world. Of some I will tell you shortly; of others I shall not speak.

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Of a Certain Abbess whom I Saw and Knew There

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In this place I saw an abbess of worshipful conversation, whom I knew when I was a child, and who died fourteen years ago. She had great fervour, and was zealous in chastity and purity, and she had been wise, vigilant, and devout in the care of the sisters committed to her. I saw this abbess in the beginning of the joyful place; for she was but newly come there from her pains. She had upon her clean clothing, but not very white and shining. From her appearance she seemed to have been ill a long time, and to have just come from bathing. I will not stop to tell how she had suffered severely for some little things—such as the parade of virtue, love of flattery, and innumerable things by which the feeble ignorance of good people often offends. In her life she had not overcome the vice of vain-glory. She told me she had suffered principally because she loved her kinsfolk carnally, and gave them much from the

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place she ruled, when some of the sisters, of whom she was appointed the spiritual mother, lacked such things as belonged even to their living and clothing. When I heard this I was much surprised, for I know scarcely any prelate in these days who uses such moderation as she did towards her relations and cousins. And as for superfluity,—as far as I knew she hardly gave them even necessities! Her nephews and nieces and other relations she did not wed into carnal matrimony, but took them to religion to serve God. And she appeared so stern in words and behaviour to them, that when she was friendly and pleasant to strangers, she was only haughty and harsh to her cousins. She used to enquire into their faults minutely, and when she found them at fault, she would punish them severely. She insisted upon the honesty and purity of all servants and persons belonging to the monastery, but most particularly in those that were relations. There was no brother nor sister of her kindred that she used to favour, as

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she did others who were not related. When I said so to her, and that she had influenced many to keep the rules of their order and the vows of the religion that they had taken upon them, the abbess said to me again: "It is as you say; nevertheless for the carnal affection and love that I did not relinquish as I was bound to do when I gave myself to the spiritual life, I could find no excuse before the strict judgment of God; and I was examined in every point of my life, office, and profession. Further, I set an example of selfishness, and of too much absorption in business, which spread among the sisters, so that the care of their friends and the world became their first thought. I should rather have watched over the souls that I had charge of, than the superfluous provision of worldly good for my friends, whom though once they were mine, I forever renounced for God."

While the abbess was thus talking to me we went further into the joyful field.

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Of a Certain Prior who Lived Devoutly and Died Holily

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In this joyful place was a reverent person that was once a prior of a monastery, and died three years ago. I saw him blessed among the holy spirits and saints, in blissful rest, delivered from all pain, merry and joyful now, but still more glad, aye, incomparably glad, in the certain hope that he was to have sight of God. While he lived he bore the habit of a monk, both upon his body and in his heart, from childhood to old age, and even unto death. He hid the flower of his virginity in the bosom of meekness, and he coupled to them most surely the virtue of patience. He practiced great abstinence and long fasts with great devotion; and when necessity compelled him to go about doing works of charity, as his office required, he would constantly be reciting some psalms or other devout prayers to God. No one had more com-

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passion on those who were in temptation, or was more earnest and active in the service of the sick than he. He never denied them their petitions and requests if they could be granted. The merest sign of distress was sufficient to ensure his sympathy and help. Thus he lived in purity and holiness, and yet laboured for many years in great bodily weakness, until through feebleness and disease he had entirely lost the sight of one of his eyes. Two years before his death, other limbs failed him through various diseases; yet notwithstanding all this, he would never be absent from the convent, or the choir, or from the common table of the refectory, where he was fed rather by the refection of his brethren than by consuming his own portion. Since his youth he had entirely abstained from flesh foods, but for his brethren who were sick and feeble, he hastened to procure meat to aid their recovery.

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At last he succumbed to a sickness called dysentery. When he was almost at death's door, he took for his spiritual succour and comfort the holy and blessed sacrament of Our Lord's precious Body and Blood, with his last annointing; and so he lay, almost ten days without any food, receiving only the benefits of God and the exhortation of his brethren. The night before he passed to God, about the hour of divine service, he saw Our Lord Jesus, and our blessed lady, Saint Mary coming to him; and with a compassionate sign they beckoned him to follow them. He called for his brethren and told them the vision he had seen, and said with heartfelt gladness, that he should pass away on the morrow; and so he died.

I could not remember all the things that he said before his end came; how he commended himself and his brethren to God, and exhorted

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them to continue in good living. His words and exhortation were not of man, but of the Holy Ghost that spoke in him. On the morrow, about the hour of tierce, lying in ashes and in hair, when he had said the service of the day, and of the Holy Trinity, and of our Blessed Lady, which he used since he was a child, and when he had heard the passion of Our Lord from the four Evangelists, and other psalms, with great compunction and humility, and many sweet kissings of Our Lord's Cross, and salutations of our Blessed Lady, he devoutly expired, blessing his brethren. When I saw this worshipful father, with whom I had been acquainted from my youth, I greeted him, and he saluted me most meekly, and told me many things.

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Of a Certain Young Monk of This Prior's who Was There

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This reverent father and prior showed me there a certain youth, who had embraced religion in his childhood with fervent devotion, and was a monk in the same monastery where this blessed father was prior. He lived there for a time, but not for long, for he was suddenly released by death, and passed blessedly out of this world. I never saw him alive, but I had often heard the brothers speak of his pure and innocent life, and of his holy passing.

The prior said to me, speaking of him: "This is my son, of whom you have heard; he was my comrade in holy living and devotion when I lived in the world; he is now my companion in heaven, and will be an equal heir with me eternally in everlasting joy and bliss."

The same young monk foretold the hour of

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his passing to his brethren before his death; and heavenly music was heard at that hour, as many can tell who were there in the monastery at the time.

The prior for various negligences of his own, and for faults of his brethren, had suffered some slight pains. The young monk had also offended in small things, and had suffered some little penalties; but both were equal in whiteness and joy. The prior, as it seemed, had earned a greater reward, for the larger number of good deeds and virtuous qualities of his longer life.

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Of a Worshipful Priest

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I also saw in this place a worshipful priest, who in his life had done much good to the people by his holy preaching. He had the gift of preaching joined with a zeal of righteousness, and set a good example of living; so that he recalled not only the people of his own parishes from wicked living and evil deeds, but also informed and taught innumerable people of other parishes far and near, exhorting them to leave their sins and fulfil Our Lord's commandments, to daily increase in good and be perfected in virtue, and so to continue to the end. Some were so far fallen into the devil's bonds by evil and wickedness, that they afterwards understood how they had been snatched from the devil and his service, and recalled, by the Priest's prayers and holy teaching; and through Our Lord's infinite mercy, by their confession and satisfaction and penance, had been per-

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mitted to stand again, perfect in the faith, and to lead good lives.

For what cause he had suffered various pains for a short time, I will leave out here, because I have told of many such things.

As we penetrated further into that joyful place of paradise, there came a clearer light, and we perceived a sweeter savour; and those we found there were whiter and more glad than any that we had seen before.

Why should I tarry now to number those persons and their merits, some of whom I knew in this world, and some I did not know? For all that were in that place were ordained to be the citizens of the high and everlasting Jerusalem; and all had passed through the strife and battle of the world, and were victors of devils. The less they had been encumbered and enthralled by wretched living and worldly vices, the easier were the pains they went through.

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How Our Lord's Passion was Represented and Shown to the Souls That Were in Paradise

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Neither tongue can tell nor man's mind worthily imagine the things that we saw as we went further. Who is worthy to put into words how, in the midst of those blessed and saintly souls, the holy cross of Christ's Passion was presented to them, around which infinite thousands were standing as if Our Lord had been present in His Body; so they worshipped and hallowed His Blessed Passion.

There the sweet Redeemer of mankind was seen, Our sweet Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as if He had just been put upon the cross. His body was black and bloody from the scourges and beating, and cruelly disfigured by foul spitting, crowned with sharp thorns and smitten through with great nails. His side was cruelly pierced with a spear, and from His hands and feet purple blood ran out, and from His holy side came down blood and water. At this

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great and wonderful spectacle stood His holy mother, Our Blessed Lady, Saint Mary, not now in sadness and mourning, but joyful and glad, and looking fair and beautiful. And there also, beside her, stood the sweet disciple of Christ, Saint John, the blessed Evangelist.

And who can conceive how those holy souls ran thither from every side, gladly and joyfully to witness that blessed sight? Oh, what devotion was shown by those who beheld the glorious vision! Oh, what concourse there was of worshipping and thanking Our Lord Jesu Christ, and how marvellous was their joy and gladness!

Recalling these things to my own mind, I cannot say whether sorrow, devotion, compassion, or gratulation takes hold upon my unhappy soul most powerfully. The wonder and marvel of it all lift me out of myself. Who would

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not sorrow deeply to see so fair and so awful a body put to such great injuries and bitter pains? Who would not with all his heart have compassion upon His meekness, so moved and vexed with the torments and upbraiding of such wicked folk?

And yet what joy and comfort must arise from the thought that by His passion and meek death, Hell is fought against, the devil is overcome, his power bound, and his strength destroyed; and that man who was lost is restored again to grace, and taken out of the painful prison of hell and blessedly united to the holy angels of heaven!

Who would not marvel at the great goodness and mercy of Our Saviour Christ Jesu, who being now immortal, vouchsafes that His Passion and Death, which He once suffered in the body on this earth for the redemption of man-

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kind, shall be represented and shown in a vision to the holy souls that are in paradise, so that their devotion and love may the more increase and ascend towards Him.

Many other things which I saw and heard there, I think it better at this time to leave out than to write.

Suddenly this blessed sight and holy vision was taken away, and all that great multitude of souls that came to worship the holy cross of Christ's Passion, went again to their own places with joy and gladness.

I still followed my leader and pilot, Saint Nicholas, and went further and further, full filled with great joy and gladness among the bright and light mansions of blessed souls. The whiteness of those that were in this place, and the sweetness of savour, and the melody of singing praises to God, were inestimable, and scarcely credible to man's understanding.

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Of the Entering of the Gate of Paradise and of the Joy that Appeared Therein

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Now when we had passed all these places and sights, and had journeyed still further inward, more and more joy and fairness greeted us on every side. At last we saw afar a glorious wall of crystal, whose height no one could tell, and the length none could measure. When we came near to it I saw a bright shining gate. Thither came flocking from all sides the multitude of those blessed souls that were near and wanted to enter in at that fair gate. The cross was set in the centre of the gateway; now it was lifted up on high and gave to those that came, a wide and free entrance; afterwards it was let down again and shut out others who were waiting to come in. How joyful those that entered were, and how reverently those tarried that awaited the raising of the cross again!

Here Saint Nicholas and I stood together,

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and I watched for a long time with great wonder the raising and lowering of the cross, while some went in and some waited outside. At last Saint Nicholas and I came to the gate hand in hand. When we came the cross was lifted and all that were there went in. Then my companion Saint Nicholas, freely went in, I following; but suddenly without warning the cross came down between our hands, and parted me from Saint Nicholas; and when I saw this I was much afraid.

But Saint Nicholas said to me: "Be not afraid, but only have certain faith in Our Lord Jesu Christ, and doubtless thou shalt come in!"

After this my hope and trust returned, and the cross was raised, and I entered. What brightness and clearness of light was shining within, no one must ask or seek to know from me, for I cannot describe it by word, or remem-

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ber it in thought! That glorious shining light was so bright and smooth and so ravished any that beheld it, that it lifted them above themselves, and what I had seen before seemed as nothing in comparison with this! That brightness—it was indeed inestimable! Nevertheless it did not dazzle the sight, but rather cleared it. It shone most marvellously, and was an intense delight to see, and wonderfully strengthened the sight of those that beheld it.

I could see nothing within but the light, and the wall of crystal through which we had come. From the ground, up to the top of the wall, were steps beautifully and marvellously arranged, by which the joyful company that came in at the gate gladly ascended. There was no labour, no difficulty, no lingering in their ascent; the higher they went, the happier they were. I stood beneath upon the ground and

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watched for some time how they came in at the gate and ascended the steps.

At last, as I looked up higher, I saw sitting on a throne of joy, Our Blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, in the likeness of man. Above Him, as it seemed to me, were five hundred souls who had lately ascended to that glorious throne, and they came to Our Lord and worshipped Him, and thanked Him for His great mercy and grace shown to them. Some were seen on the upper parts of the walls, as they walked hither and thither. I knew for certain that this place, where I saw Our Lord sitting on a throne, was not the high Heaven of Heavens, where the blessed spirits of angels and the holy souls of righteous men gather in the sight of God, seeing Him in His majesty, as He is; where also innumerable thousands of holy spirits and angels serve Him and assist Him.

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But then from thence, without any difficulty or waiting, they ascend up to the high Heaven, which is blessed by the sight of the everlasting Godhead, where only the holy angels, and the souls of the righteous who are as perfect as angels, see the Immortal King of all Worlds, face to face,—He Who hath only immortality, and dwelleth in the light, Who is inaccessible; for no mortal man may come there, nor may see it. For God is only to be seen of holy spirits that are pure and clean, and are not soiled by any corruption of body or of soul.

In this vision that I saw, I conceived so much joy and gladness in my soul, that whatever can be said by the tongue, is still utterly insufficient to express the joy of the heart.

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How the Monk Came Out Again Through the Same Gate of Paradise

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When I had seen all these sights, and many others, my lord Saint Nicholas who held me by the hand, said shortly thus: "Lo, son, now in part, and as far as possible, thou hast seen and beheld the state of the world to come, according to thy great desire and petition; the perils of those who offend and err, the pains of sinners, the peace of those who have finished their purification, the desires of those that are going heavenward, and the joys of such as have come to the court of heaven, and also the joy of Christ's reigning. And now thou must return to thyself and to thine, and to the world's fighting. Thou shalt have and share the joys that thou hast seen, and much more, if thou continue and persevere in the dread of God."

When he had said this, he brought me forth by the gate through which we had come in. And

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very heavy and sorrowful I was,—more than anyone knows, for I knew that I must return from that heavenly bliss to this world's wretchedness. He exhorted me that I should prepare and await the summons from my body, in purity of heart, cleanliness of life, and meekness of spirit, with diligent regard to my religion. He said earnestly to me: "Keep the commandments of God, and shape thy course by the example of righteous men; and it shall truly be that after the term of thy bodily living, thou shalt be admitted to their fellowship everlastingly."

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Of the Sweet Peal and Melody of Bells that he heard in Paradise and also how he Came to himself Again

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While the holy confessor, Saint Nicholas, spake thus with me, I heard a marvellous peal of bells, ringing with solemn sweetness, as though all the bells in the world, or whatever has sound, had been rung together at one time. In this peal and ringing broke out a marvellous sweetness, and a various mingling of melody. I do not know whether the beauty of the melody or the sweetness of the sound was more wonderful. Perforce I listened intently to such a great volume of sound; and my mind was suspended by it, while I listened. Suddenly, as this wonderful music ceased, I found that I was separated from the sweet fellowship of my duke and leader, Saint Nicholas.

Then I was returned to myself again; and anon I heard the voices of the brothers that stood about my bed, and my bodily strength

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came to me little by little; my eyes opened and my sight returned, as you observed. The sickness and feebleness which had afflicted me for so long was entirely cured and gone from me, and I sat up before you as strong and healthy as I was once weak and sorrowful. I thought then that I was in the church before the altar, where I first worshipped the cross.

Concerning the length of time that I lay in the trance, I expected to find it noon of the same day, and the space of but one matins; but, as I understand, I lay in it two days or more. I have now told you as compendiously as I could the things that I saw and which were revealed to me in body and in spirit, and which in your holiness and charity you urged and commanded me to relate. And now I beseech you that you will vouchsafe to pray to God for me, an unhappy wretch, that I may yet escape the

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great and grievous pains of the sinners that I saw, and come to the joy of the holy souls that I knew, and also to see everlastingly the glorious face of Our Blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesu Christ, and our Blessed Lady, Saint Mary.

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A Proof that this Revelation is of God, and Must Needs Be True, Because of the Great Miracles That Our Lord Showed by This Same Monk at That Time

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Many lessons and open examples in the course of this narrative evidently prove that this vision is not of man's invention, but a divine manifestation of the will of God, revealed to Christian people. Nevertheless if there be such infidelity or infirmity in any, that they cannot believe these things, let them consider the great sickness and feebleness of the monk before-hand, and how he was suddenly so strengthened after it that he was able to bear witness to the truth of the vision that he saw. Also let them remember the great noise that went on about him, and how he was pricked in the feet with needles, and nothing availed to rouse him. Further, let them recall how his eyes were sunk far into his head, and that he was scarcely seen to breathe for two days; and that, after many

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hours, there was perceptible nothing but a faint trembling in his vital veins. Again let them consider his continual weeping and tears, which lasted many days after he came out of his trance. Besides all these things, we can mention another very gracious miracle and true token of God's healing of him, equally to be marvelled at.

For almost a year he had a terrible open wound in his left leg, like a great canker, which pained him intolerably. He was wont to say that he felt as if he carried a hot plate of iron bound to his leg. No plaster, or ointment, or leeches laid upon it, or any other medicine of all that had been tried, eased his pain or drew the wound together. Nevertheless, during his trance he was so entirely cured that he himself marvelled to feel the pain and ache and see the wound so utterly gone, that not

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even a sign of redness or whiteness remained to mar the wonderful cure of God. The only difference between the leg that had the wound and his other leg was, that where the sore had been no hair grew.

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Epilogue

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Very delectable it was to him, he said, from that time, to hear any solemn peal of bells ringing, because then would come to his mind again, the sweet peal and melody that he had heard when he was amongst the blessed souls in Paradise. Indeed, after he had come to himself, and his brethren had told him it was the holy time of Easter, he first believed it, when he heard them solemnly ring to compline, for then he knew that the peal and melody that he had heard with such joy and gladness in Paradise, betokened the same solemn Feast of Easter, in which Our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, rose up visibly and bodily from death unto life: to Whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be now and evermore everlasting joy and bliss.

Amen

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